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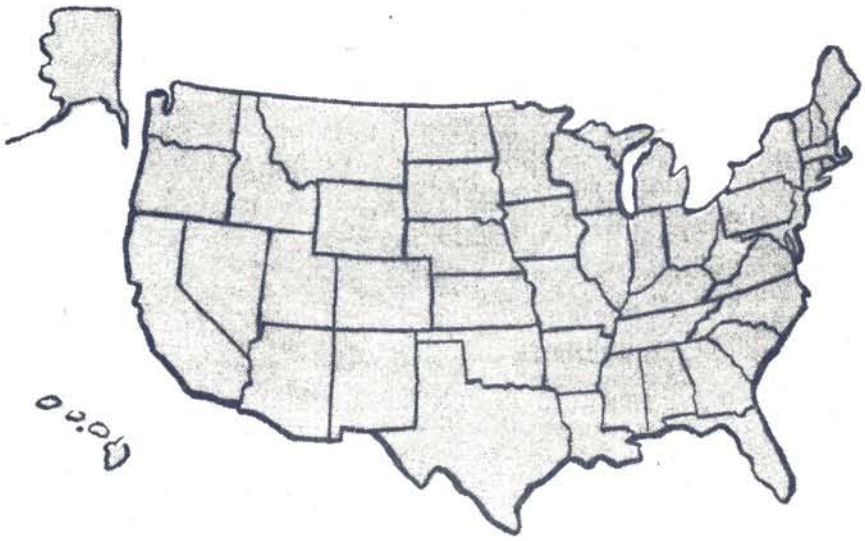
commonweal

AMERICA.....

The Trend to Spiritual Narcissism

JOSEPH H. FICHTER



The Trend to Bigger Arms Budgets

MICHAEL T. KLARE

FRANK GETLEIN A HANDLE ON HALDEMAN
ABIGAIL McCARTHY THE POLITICALLY IGNORANT
BRIAN WICKER THE JOB OF ADULT EDUCATION
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. KEEP
GERALD WEALES PAUL ROBESON
LARZER ZIFF THE OUTER MAN AN
ALSO: EUGENE HILLMAN, EDWARD
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NEWS & VIEWS

Changing Times—I

If you doubted that this was a new day for the "lesser" clergy, catch the decision of a Michigan arbitration review board in favor of one Fr. Joseph Bruetsch.

Bruetsch, a priest of the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana, was serving in the Detroit area to gain team-ministry experience. He encountered the opposition of his pastor, and was fired and evicted from an associate pastorate at St. Joseph parish, Lake Orion. The date was December, 1974.

Bruetsch filed a grievance under the due-process procedures of the seven Michigan dioceses. After a series of delays and false starts, the case went to binding arbitration—for the first time in the Catholic history of the state. Among those named in the complaint were Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Walter J. Schoenherr and Cardinal John Dearden.

The charges against Dearden were dropped, but a finding was handed down that Bishop Schoenherr and his assistant, Fr. Kenneth Untener, had denied Bruetsch basic due process, failing to give him notice or hearing, opportunity to confront his accuser, or present evidence on his side. Bishop Schoenherr, the opinion found, acted solely on the pastor's complaints without ever discussing them with Bruetsch. Bruetsch's head then rolled. He took action and won his case.

The decision was appealed, but was unanimously upheld by an appellate panel. Bruetsch was awarded $14,800 in back wages and benefits, and church officials were directed to publicize the decision to parishioners.

Last month, allegedly after being informed that a civil suit to enforce the award was imminent, Cardinal Dearden authorized the payment and promised compliance with the arbitration-ordered notice to parishioners by Feb. 21.

Bruetsch is now serving as Lafayette diocesan director of religious education, with offices in Kokomo.

Changing Times—II

A different church. . . . A different army too.

In Germany, some active-duty soldiers, their wives and dependents are currently circulating a petition against the neutron bomb.

The text:

We, the undersigned American soldiers and civilian personnel stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany, are against the deployment of the neutron bomb.

A weapon that kills people while saving property may be good for property owners, but not for those of us who have only our lives to lose.

We are against a weapon that makes war more likely.

News reports say the response to the petition has been "positive among the lower-ranking soldiers," but there's no figure yet on signers. Circulators of the petition are said to be encountering threats and harassment, and a number of signed petitions have been "stolen" from the soldiers' barracks.

More on Kung

Support is lining up behind Father Hans Küng in the contention with the German hierarchy over his book *On Being a Christian*. [News & Views, 1/20/78]

More than 100 theology students at the University of Tübingen have signed an open letter to the bishops criticizing their treatment of Küng.

The letter accuses the bishops of violating "existing norms of decency in human relations" in the way they have attacked Küng, and, as a consequence, of having made more difficult an objective discussion of the book itself.

In particular the students object to the publication of correspondence between the bishops and Küng without the latter's consent, and to the fact that whereas the bishops have alleged inadequacies in Küng's dogmatic formulations, they have said nothing about his deeper pastoral motives.

With respect to dogmatic formulations, the students feel that Küng has been unfairly depicted as one "suspected of heresy." They find this especially objectionable since Küng did not claim either "fullness or finality" for the ideas expressed in *On Being a Christian*, but rather asked readers to "reflect carefully" on his views.

In their criticism of Küng's book, the bishops singled out certain sections, including the treatment of Christ's divinity, as being "too short and inadequate." They asked Küng to publish "necessary additions and corrections." Küng responded that he would take their criticisms into account in his next book, *Does God Exist?*

That hasn't satisfied the bishops.

Hear, Hear!

The promotion of the quality of life requires sound and inspiring ethical views, Archbishop Denis E. Hurley of Durban, South Africa, said at the 14th quadrennial world congress in Bombay of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations.

This, in turn, involves the Church's taking account, he added, of (1) new attitudes towards the world (the abandonment of dualism); (2) the change in emphasis from rules to ideals; (3) the decline in importance of the concept of natural law in decisions about good and evil; (4) the shift away from the "oracular" view of church authority; and (5) the stress on the corporate and social dimensions of today's ethics.

Odds and Ends

Quotes from the Times:

"The Federal Government has another laboratory now being prepared for comparably stringent safety standards. This is at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. This laboratory will be used for study of dangerous virtues and other agents of infectious disease."

So never mind about virtue being its own reward. Rush, if you're thinking of applying for funds.

* * *

"Armin Shimerman, a 5-foot-six Off-Broadway actor, who is enamored of a 5-foot-11-inch Off Off Broadway actress named Rita Litton, produced a well-thumbed copy of Kierkegaard's *The Denial of Death* to back up his claim that this was one of his favorite books even before *Annie Hall*."

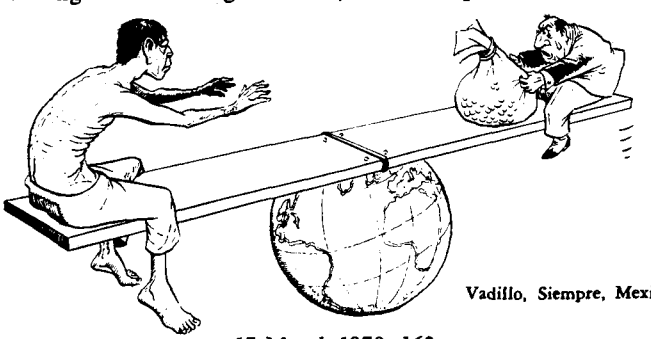
Tolstoy's Annie Hall, *no doubt.*

* * *

And if all that isn't embarrassing enough, the *Ann Arbor News* ran a picture of Connecticut Senator Lowell Weicker with "his new bribe," Camille DiLorenzo Butler.

It's almost enough to make you give up *Mad* magazine for newspapers.

JOHN DEEDY



Vadillo, Siempre, Mexico

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CORRESPONDENCE

Who's Put-On?

Toronto, Canada

To the Editors: Apropos my note on the "ordination" of women, and the replies thereto [Jan. 20], perhaps it is fitting to point to the fact that the user is always the content of any artifact (whether it is clothing, language, or motorcar), since this is richly borne out by the comments of your correspondents. My observations about the role of the performer or speaker as "putting on" the public as a sexual act, reverberates with Dr. Johnson's observation about a woman's preaching being like a dog walking on its hind legs. Johnson intuitively grasped the sexual posture involved, but chose not to push it to the full figure.

I was not concerned with theology in my observations, but merely rhetoric and psychology. The speaker or performer has inevitably to "put on" his public as a corporate mask, and this involves simultaneously the three roles of the *logos*: *the logos prophorikos* (the uttered or spoken), the *logos spermatikos* (the embedding of the seed in things), and finally, the *logos hendiathetos* (the mode of inner resonance): "You that have ears to hear, let them hear." (Luke 8:8)

Even the question of the "put on" assumes a familiarity with the world of the mask and the persona as presented by Baudelaire and Pirandello and others. These are *structural* matters that do not involve personal points of view, even though they do involve a wide range of aesthetic awareness which would require a very considerable essay to explain.

MARSHALL MCLUHAN
Centre for Culture and Technology
University of Toronto

Name Dropping

Plainview, N.Y.

To the Editors: George Shea's recent (January 20) review of my memoir

(*Continued on page 191*)

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THE MID EAST PACKAGE

The sale of $4.8 billion worth of military planes to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel—that's the Carter administration package deal for the Mid East. The package breaks down into components of $2.5 billion for Saudi Arabia, $1.9 billion for Israel and $400 million for Egypt. The purpose, said Washington spokesmen, is to maintain the existing military balance and to advance the cause of peace in the Mid East. The move would sell fighter aircraft to Egypt by the United States for the first time and would provide Saudi Arabia with the most advanced of American military planes, while giving Israel far less in new weapons than it had requested. Administration officials emphasized that the proposed arms sale to the Mid East represents a package which would be withdrawn if Congress rejected any portion of it, which makes it hard for pro-Israeli Congressmen. Under law, Congress can block arms sales of this scope by a majority vote within 30 days after it has been formally notified of the administration decision. In this case, a great uproar both inside and outside Congress is inevitable.

Friends and supporters of Israel have already expressed their dismay over the administration proposal, and this is hardly surprising. Israel's air power was decisive for victory over the Arabs both in 1967 and 1973, and until now Israel was the only nation in the Mid East to receive sophisticated American weapons. Israel has genuine reason to fear any substantial change in the quantity and quality of Arab weaponry. Significantly, even in an editorial favoring the arms package, the *New York Times* said that in making its proposal the administration was "gambling" and spoke of its own "hunch" that the administration had made the right decision—terms not likely to reassure those who fear for Israel in this matter. Nonetheless, the administration can make a rather strong case for its position. As far as the sale to Egypt is concerned, the planes involved are not par-

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ticularly advanced and would not enable Egypt to challenge Israel's superiority in the air. Since Egypt broke with the Soviet Union it has been unable to get arms there, and it can be argued that it is good for Egypt now to turn to us. Further, Egypt would probably be able to buy comparable planes in Western Europe if we refused to provide them. And lastly, the sale is said to be in line with the U.S. policy of encouraging moderate Arab regimes such as that of Mr. Sadat.

The sale to Saudi Arabia is touchier. The planes involved are very advanced and could conceivably constitute a threat to Israel. However, Washington officials argue that the move is necessary for a variety of reasons. Saudi Arabia is crucial for the cause of Arab moderation and stability in the region. Saudi oil reserves are vital to the U.S. and Western Europe, and Saudi officials have used their powerful influence in OPEC to keep the supply of oil up and the price from rising even more rapidly, at considerable disadvantage to their own interests. At the same time Saudi Arabia fears attack by radical states, particularly Iraq, which looks to the Soviet Union for inspiration and is being armed by the USSR. Israel worries that Saudi Arabia might in a crisis transfer the proposed F-15's to other Arab states for use against Israel, but it is said that this would be impossible without a lengthy period of pilot training on what is reported to be a very sophisticated weapon. Further, the first Eagles cannot be provided for a considerable time and would not be operational in Saudi Arabia until 1982, which leaves room for a change in U.S. plans if signals indicate reversal is called for.

All in all, then, a case can be made for the proposed arms package for the Mid East, and we would therefore support it, but grudgingly and with considerable reluctance. Whatever arguments can be made for this specific proposal at this particular time, the basic fact remains that salvation does not lie down the arms race road, and this is strikingly true in the Mid East. Saudi Arabia may have its oil wealth, but Israel is staggering under its military budget and Egypt is in desperate straits. Within 30 years, for example, Egypt will double its population which is already growing at a rate that devours any gains in agricultural production, and this in a country where only 25 percent of the people can read and write. The same imbalance exists throughout much of the Mid East. What can war planes do to ease this situation? So we would support the administration proposal but without enthusiasm, and only in the hope that it will provide a breathing space in which real work for a lasting peace in the area can be pursued.

COMING: Thomas C. Fox writes about the toxic chemical PBB and how it entered the food chain in Michigan.

WASHINGTON REPORT

A HANDLE ON HALDEMAN

One of the most spectacular theatrical productions in our century was Max Reinhardt's *Everyman* staged on the steps and platz of Salzburg Cathedral. In that climactic scene in which Death Comes For Everyman, the figure of Death appeared on the battlements on the handy mini-mountain nearby and cried as if at the other end of a tunnel, "Jedermann!" and again, "Jedermann!" and so on until the story of us all worked itself out.

I used to think of that magnificent spectacle in the midst of a rather shabbier one some years later and in another country, the Watergate Theater right here in Washington. I could visualize Death as Sam Ervin, Peter Rodino or Judge Sirica, crying from their respective high places, "Haldeman!" and again, "Erlichman!" until those Katzenjammer Kids of the Nixon White House were tagged by justice in the middle of their unregenerate lying and tucked away as an example to us all of what happens if you hang around with people like Richard Nixon.

In the play, of course, Everyman makes his peace with man and God and goes consoled into eternity. No such luck with the Nixonians. You can't exactly call their act death and transfiguration, because there doesn't seem to have been any transfiguration. They're still lying away like they always did, but now they're doing it for big-time bucks instead of the pittances they were picking up when Haldeman and Erlichman were two of the finest public servants Richard Nixon ever fired in the hope of saving what could be saved.

Haldeman is the latest of the scurvy crew to do the reprise on ancient themes and he poses a pretty epistemological problem. To wit: If Haldeman was lying under oath back there in the touring company "Jedermann" days, how can we know he is not lying now? The apparent answer is that Haldeman present contradicts Haldeman past. Since everybody, including a jury of his peers, knew he was lying then, his apparent present agreement with that verdict suggests he may be telling the truth now. But as anyone who has followed the

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Haldeman variation on the Nixonian theme knows in his bones, the truth is not in Haldeman anymore than it is in his master and creator. Part of the price of being a Nixonian is that you lose the ability to see truth, let alone tell truth. Truth is what serves Nixon's purposes. When, at last, you have passed out from under the spell of the master, as Haldeman allegedly has, you don't regain your capacity to distinguish truth from non-truth, you just automatically fall into a different pattern of lying.

It is not really difficult at all to see how Haldeman could have been lying then and is still lying now. He said then that neither Nixon nor he himself knew anything at all about either the break-in or the cover-up. He says now—or, really, implies: there is hardly a declarative sentence in the book—that Nixon instigated the whole thing, presided over the cover-up from the beginning and personally wiped out, or tried to, the famed 18½ minutes of incriminating evidence on tape. (The despicable Haig, it will be recalled, blamed the tape-gap on "sinister forces." Unexpectedly, Haig was telling the truth for a change, though not intentionally.)

Needless to say, it never occurred to me that Nixon did not order the burglary, did not initiate the cover-up or did not personally or by deputy preside over the tape wipe-out. The epistomological problem posed by Haldeman lying yesterday, lying today, lying forever is solved by the simple consideration that not only was Nixon directly involved in all those crimes, but, obviously, so was Haldeman. He's probably saving that aspect of life in Robbers' Roost for his second book.

Other hints, innuendos and sly suggestions by non-declarative Haldeman are false on their face. For example, he fingers a John Dean assistant, Fred Fielding, as the Deep Throat character in the newspaper romance that ran concurrently with and only occasionally interfered with the legislative and judicial process that brought the crew to as much justice as they're likely to get this side of the Reinhardt finale. On the basis of Haldeman's hint, it seems to me we can assert positively that Fielding was not Deep Throat for the simple reason that if Haldeman knew Fielding was Deep Throat, Fielding would have died swiftly and mysteriously. They played hard ball in those days, as they were all fond of saying.

The same analytical technique disposes of the Haldeman hint that the Russians proposed a US-USSR joint nuclear attack on China's nuclear plants and installations and that Kissinger turned it down. While we are assured by the Kissinger personal press gang that he was the tenderest and wittiest of men in private, on the public record, he was incapable of turning down a proposed bombing anywhere. He liked bombing people, easily surpassed the record previously held by Dean Rusk for bombings participated in by a Secretary of State and would have been totally out of character rejecting the chance to wrap up the nuke record as well.

Since there is so little of substance in the book—the principal hard fact seems to be that Haldeman now hates Nixon the way he used to hate the Republic, the Constitution and all honest people for the love of Nixon—the only worthwhile speculation must center on the manner of its publication. This was not without interest, but only in a media age like our own could the interest be as intense as this. The book was published by the *New York Times*'s own book company and the *Times* itself took over the distribution of daily and weekly publication excerpts, giving first refusals to regular subscribers to the Times News Service. In Washington, that meant the evening *Star* got the nod, not the morning *Post*. A few days before the first excerpts were scheduled, the *Post* published large excerpts of its own, derived, it said, from something close to the whole book, not quite. Tempests. Teapots. Scornful denunciation by *Times* of what it termed *Post*'s "second-rate burglary." Baleful mutterings of possible suits. Tumult among the subscribing papers. Stonewall by *Post* on how it got the goods.

Following the theoretical style of Haldeman's advertisement for himself, it is easy to construct not one but two theories of how the *Post* got the goods. First theory: the *Post* owns *Newsweek* and *Newsweek* had bought the bag. The common ownership decided that since the corporation had paid, the corporation would use the purchase where it would do the most good, which was clearly in the *Post* ahead of time rather than just in *Newsweek* ahead of *Time*, the weekly newsmagazine. If it be objected that this kind of of corporate shuffle is against journalistic ethics, it need only be recalled that the *Post* is the country's leading strike-breaker, union-buster and scab paper and as such may be presumed to have no journalistic ethics that would actually bother anyone.

Second theory: Haldeman himself surreptitiously sold the bootleg copy to the *Post* in order to disrupt what he and his ilk mistakenly regard as a united front of radical-liberals on the *Post* and the *Times*. He could have done this while on Christmas holiday from the minimum security prison which minimally protects us from him for his term. It was generally assumed that Haldeman let his hair grow out of the gauleiter clip in order to deceive a jury into thinking him human. . . . Suppose, though, that he bought a wig, instead, such as the one used by Howard Hunt in another part of the show, preserving the gauleiter look out of old affection. In that case, he need only have arranged to meet a *Post* bagman in some garage at midnight, pretend to be the ghost of Haldeman past, hand over the scrivening and grab the bag.

Elsewhere on the death and transfiguration for cash front, the role of Henry Kissinger posed problems, as it often does. Kissinger appeared on ABC and I as-

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sume CBS as well to deny various Haldeman hints. But Kissinger is under exclusive contract to NBC. Did he collect extra fees for answering newsmen's questions on the rival networks, or did those networks pay NBC for the use of its property? Will we ever know?

And the head Nixonian of all is selling some copies of his impending $20 book for $50 with autograph, $250 with autograph plus certificate from publisher that the autograph is genuine. This special offering is addressed to die-hard Nixonites. It seems reasonable that a special edition for $1,000 will be sold to Rabbi Korff.

FRANK GETLEIN

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FROM BRITAIN

THE JOB OF ADULT EDUCATION

A few days ago a parish priest with an interest in adult education faced me wtih the following question: "Last Sunday at Mass, as I was reading the gospel, I noticed a young man in the back pew who was reading the *Daily Mirror*. As a Catholic educator, tell me what could you do about that sort of thing?" (The *Daily Mirror* is a popular tabloid newspaper with a vast working-class readership.)

Having spent the last seventeen years of my professional life trying to find ways of encouraging more than a tiny handful of the unskilled working-class to enter any form of adult education, I was naturally flummoxed. It is true that large numbers of liberally-minded and earnest educators of the past and the present have tried to console themselves with comforting stories about successful ventures into working-class adult education. But the facts are on the whole against them. With the possible exception of courses designed for improving people's literacy, their job-opportunities, or their efficiency at the negotiating table with employers, the unskilled manual working-class in Britain is today conspicuously absent, certainly in anything like its rightful proportion, from all forms of adult educaton. So, not surprisingly, when I tried to think of something helpful to say, my answer must have seemed pretty unconvincing. But on reflection, I think I now know what my reply ought to have been.

The answer is something to do with India. Let me explain. My wife and I spent the five weeks just before Christmas in North India. Our tour ranged from the Himalayan foothills to Bombay, and we saw such disparate things as the postwar Bombay skyscrapers (built on reclaimed land with aid of the latest bulldozers) and the huge Kailasa temple at Ellora (carved out of the solid basalt of the Deccan more than a thousand years ago with nothing but hammers and chisels). We heard such varied sounds as those of the drums and harmoniums of folk-musicians in medieval Jaisalmer (a sandstone jewel in the middle of the desert) and of the omnipresent and inescapable motor-horns of downtown Delhi—which must surely be one of the noisiest, as well as one of the dustiest cities in the world. But throughout this variegated kaleidoscope of new experiences and friendships, one thing stood out clearly everywhere: the Indian genius for *feeling*. It comes out in innumerable ways. If you innocently ask, for example, for the nearest place where you can cash a traveler's check on a bank holiday (a common enough need, given the number of bank holidays there are), the average Indian will suggest some place you can go to even though he knows that it won't be open. He will do this simply out of sheer fellow-feeling; he *wants* it to be open and he regards this as practically tantamount to having opened it for you. So feelings, it seems to be assumed, can actually create the very things they crave; and of course in some sorts of case, they can. This is perhaps particularly so in the case of religion. 'Spiritual' things which seem quite impossible to Western intellectuals are normal to India.

For example, take the case of your average parish mass in a Bombay church. Physically and even intellectually, the Sunday mass we went to there was barely distinguished from the same thing in suburban Birmingham. The same selection of words, the same range of thoughts, the same appeals for good causes, the same clothes, the same statues, the same hymns. Above all, the same hymns: or rather, the same cheerful modern doggerel sung to the same jingles with the same selection of basic chords strummed on the same brands of guitar. It seemed rather pointless to have come several thousand miles to find oneself in so familiar a bit of suburbia. But for me the important point about the hymns was this. Modern hymns are designed for the downhearted. They are mainly to cheer people up. In other words in Britain (or America), it has always seemed to me, the modern style of Catholic musical uplift suggests not the possession of a deep spiritual conviction but a frenetic attempt to manufacture one. If you carry on about "the joy in your heart" long and loud enough, you will, with luck, somehow come to experience it. Most modern hymn-singing expresses not faith, but a craving for it: something to believe in, something to feel strongly about.

Orwell once contrasted modern faith with the faith of old hymns like "Jerusalem My Happy Home" by pointing out that nowadays, whatever people's *minds* tell them, they do not *feel* themselves to be destined for

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eternal life. So talking about personal immortality, or 'heaven' (like a lot of modern theologizing) is mostly a sort of self-reassurance by people whose natural inclination is towards disbelief. It seems to me that a lot of what Orwell says is true—in England. But I don't think it is true about India. Ordinary people there may not cogitate much about the problem of immortality, but this doesn't really matter: for they feel it in their bones. And this is not only true of the Hindu belief in the cycle of rebirth: it is true also of the Christian belief in personal survival. So in a curious way, even a modern guitar-ridden mass in Bombay feels more authentic than the same thing in Birmingham. Perhaps this is why so many young people are to be found at it; indeed rather deeply involved in it.

Yet there are profound dangers in the situation. After all, the stuff that is produced in Europe or America does not travel very well, and there is a sort of alienation in the very idea of Indians, with their own massive heritage to draw upon, aping the West at its least impressive. But then one has to recognize that the Indian heritage is something the Catholic community does not know much about, and even does not want to know too much about. To become absorbed in the authentic Indian tradition must inevitably mean taking on some of the worst as well as the best things in it. I mean there is a connection between the sense I had of the Catholic community living at a certain distance from the mainstream of Indian culture and just those things it does best—the active, outgoing, energetic things. Christianity has been a creative disturbance in Indian life, as Ramchandra Gandhi (the Mahatma's grandson, who teaches philosophy in Delhi University) pointed out to me. And this creativity is something to do with being a group apart.

This brings me back to the young Britisher in the back pew with his *Daily Mirror*. For the fact is that, at the present juncture and in the present condition of British culture, there is nothing much the Church *can* say to that man: nothing, that is, to help him *feel* that 'assisting at mass' (that almost forgotten but significant phrase, with the deeply ambiguous meanings) is much more than a helpful habit, an insurance policy or a source of solace. He is there, probably, because he wants to feel that he has paid his respects and his dues. He has renewed his subscription to God, and his conscience is clear. The last thing he wants (but the first thing he needs) is then a kind of disturbance. But this means that the question mentioned at the outset is really unanswerable because, implicit in it is the assumption that above all the young man must not be 'upset.' That is, the answer must be sought within the given framework of parish 'life.' He must be offered a better kind of reassurance (nothing wrong with that) and the job of adult education in the Church today must be to provide this, by bringing to bear upon the problem all the riches and the insights of modern Catholic sensibility and modern post-Vatican II theology. Until the formula for doing this has been found, he must not be 'upset'—because of course, he may then just go away. And then where would the parish priest be? Nobody to say mass for, nobody to reassure him that his job is worthwhile.

So the question is not one that can be answered within the limits of contemporary sensibility. No amount of theoretically 'relevant' modern thought about Christ can give us the feeling that we have eternal life within us. And without an adequate diet of such feeling at its disposal the Church cannot do its job. So the problem is how to regain the relevant sorts of feeling which alone can help the man in the pew to discover for himself, in his own bones, that potentiality for eternal life which is the gift of faith. And this is a matter of the whole culture within which the Church has to operate.

Of course I'm not saying that the British lack feelings: simply that their feelings are so often misplaced. One has only to consider the sorts of feelings aroused by the National Front, with its easy racist 'answers' to the immediate problems of living, to see that there is plenty of feeling about. From the point of view of the man in the pew, as a recent test case has shown, talking about 'niggers, coons and wogs' is an extremely easy way of arousing feelings in Britain just now. (Unhappily, the judge who tried Mr. Kinsley Reade, who used these words in a speech, and let him off with a mild caution, was too out of touch with reality to notice this). So it doesn't make much difference in the end whether the young man in the back pew is sympathetic too, or abominates such language: his feelings are likely to be significantly engaged either way. The sad fact is that the Church has nothing with this sort of emotional charge to offer. No wonder that the *Daily Mirror* seems more interesting than the Daily Missal. BRIAN WICKER

(*Brian Wicker is* Commonweal's *regular correspondent in Great Britain.*)

MARY OLIVER

LAST WEEK OF WINTER

Snow blows up from the southwest, two days of it,
Wet, woolen snow, matting the oak trees and the side
of the barn.
But it's a lazy animal, a storm without bones.

The drifts can't hold, their collapsing crests
Fold over, like waves in slow motion, falling
Before the advancing ship

Named *Spring*. From the decks, in every direction,
The snow is a blanket that can't cover
The uprising of this new idea, whose time has come.

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THE POLITICALLY IGNORANT

ABIGAIL McCARTHY

In the seventh and eighth grades we took State Boards. They were tests both dreaded and challenging. Not only did our own promotions depend on them, but the reputation—nay, we were sure the very future—of our school rested on the results. I think we had a mental image of a grim-visaged group of examiners sitting somewhere under the dome of the state capitol, stroking their chins, hemming and hawing a bit as they decided whether or not the sisters could be entrusted with the further education of the future voters and taxpayers of the state and the nation. We knew very well that it was up to us to be not just as good but better than other schools in the state. (We took it for granted that the board members, surely Protestants all, were prejudiced against St. Felix.)

The ritual accompanying the taking of the tests was probably not calculated to increase our anxiety but it did just the same. We would be sitting tense behind our clean and cleaned-out desks (there was to be no temptation to cheat) when the door would be flung open and Sister Superior would come in carrying a brown envelope. Sister Hilaria would accept it with due solemnity, hold it up so that we could see that it was still sealed, then open it with trembling hands. She would scan the examination paper within very quickly and we would try to divine from her expression just how bad it was going to be. We would have been drilled for weeks on the answers to State Boards from former years and on everything she could imagine that the examiners might add this year. We knew she prayed very hard to the Holy Ghost (the Third Person was still called that then) about that and we had heard stories about her last-minute inspirations just before opening the envelope.

I have never felt that bottomless feeling in the pit of my stomach since —or the same boundless confidence once I had my copy in hand and realized that Sister really had covered everything after all—sometimes in not quite the same words or with the same slant but she had covered it all the same. There was never quite the same drama to tests once St. Felix was accredited by the North Central Association and our teachers were therefore adjudged competent to do their own testing with examinations they made up themselves. The elements of competition against unseen, unknown adversaries was gone.

In my own teaching career I learned to look down on the kind of testing represented by those old State Boards. They put a premium on memory and memory of a limited set of facts, at that—so we were told in our classes in teacher education —and they did not measure the students' understanding of the broad range of the subject matter. Still I remember the answer to those tests in history, geography and civics as if I had learned them yesterday—and I have forgotten the broad range of much else. Take Civics. Not only the future of the school rested on our knowledge in that subject but the future of the country as well. We knew that we had a mayor-council form of government locally, a county commission system, a bicameral legislature (and we knew how that last was organized). We knew that the President was Mr. Hoover, no great friend to the farmers but then we weren't that sure that Al Smith would have been either.—He was a city man, after all, and had talked in a strange accent when he stopped for a brief few minutes at the town depot during the 1928 campaign.—We were very sure of our governor's name, our senators, our congressman (he was almost a fixture), our state legislator. These were things everyone knew. We took that for granted—and so, of course, did the state examiners.

Now it seems, according to the already forgotten headlines of only a few weeks past, the National Center for Education Statistics has found through the National Assessment of Education Progress (did you know these things existed?) that not even high school students know such basic facts. And there is a lot more that they do not know.

> "Most teenagers can still name their president but . . . . . fewer than half can name one of their senators or their representative in the House. About a third don't know that a senator is elected. . . A fourth don't know that the Senate is a part of Congress. A third do not know that the Constitution guarantees their civil rights."

These uninformed students also have strange beliefs—such as that a newspaper should not be allowed to publish criticism of public officials.

This lack of information represents a significant decline from what was shown in a similar round of testing six years ago. And yet we have been assured that the American teenager today is the best-taught and best-informed in history. I don't think we can be overly encouraged by the fact that, although the students' information had declined in five categories—structure and function of government, political process, constitutional rights, respect for others, and international relations—their attitudes had stayed about the same in some areas or improved in others. They improved, for example, in relation to rights for minorities, the prob-

(Continued on page 191)

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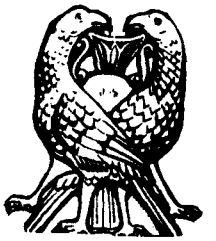
THE TREND TO SPIRITUAL NARCISSISM

JOSEPH H. FICHTER



What is going on now may well be called a qualitative revival

At his last gigantic rally in Michigan Billy Graham declared that one-third of American adults claim that they have been born again. He cited a Gallup poll showing that the number of people who believe religion is becoming more important in life has tripled since 1970. The same poll showed a surprising number of Americans interested in the inner life of the soul.

God is popular again. Everbody is talking about Jesus. At the international convention of Alcoholics Anonymous in Denver I heard more talk about God than I ever hear at clergy conferences. At the airport in Los Angeles, a Hare-Krishna person was handing out carnations, and another young man gave me a leaflet advertising Jews for Jesus. At other airports I saw the followers of Reverend Mr. Moon distributing literature, and I am regularly approached by a Sister of the Foundation Church.

The devout believer may well see the hand of God in all these zealous, evangelizing activities, and speculate about the variety of ways in which God is manifesting Himself to His children on earth. From the more profane perspective of the sociologist this is a remarkable culture phenomenon, indication of a switch in mores and folkways not quite fitting the stereotype of sophisticated, sensuous, morally corrupt Americans.

Instead of the quantitative expansion of religion that we experienced in the 1950s what is now going on may well be called a qualitative revival. This is not as easy to describe and define. It is a broad cultural phenomenon that defies a strict definition of either theological or organized fundamentalism, evangelism, or conservatism. Yet it seems to be all these things. The shift from a theologically fuzzy and socially active version of Christianity to the prayerful, emotional and personal version is difficult to fit into a sociological or cultural category.

It should be made abundantly clear that these spiritual narcissists are not to be confused with the secular narcissists discussed in two excellent articles by Peter Marin in *Harpers* (October, 1975) and by Christopher Lasch in the *New York Review of Books* (September 30, 1976). Lasch says there is at best a superficial resemblance between the two, but that the cult of psychic self-improvement is therapeutic, not religious. The worldly narcissists "hunger not for personal salvation, let alone for the restoration of an earlier golden age, but for the feeling—even if it is only a momentary illusion—of personal well-being, health and psychic security."

The editors of the *Christian Century* recently proclaimed the "Year of the Evangelicals" and Martin Marty devoted a whole issue of *Context* to the Evangelicals and warned them against "Triumphalism." But there are a lot of other Americans who are being born again in one fashion or another and who seem to be renewing an emphasis on simple, basic Christian beliefs and practices.

Certainly we have to include the so-called fringe sects that Henry Van Dusen described as the "Third Force in American Christendom" alongside Catholicism and Protestantism. The Full Gospel Business Men, the Campus Crusade for Christ, Christian athletes, Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, Transcendental Meditators—all are involved in this new wave of religious enthusiasm. Several years ago Dean Kelley gained wide attention for his explanation *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, but the return to religious fundamentals embraces more than the fringe sects, the conservatives and the Evangelicals.

Spiritual renewal is gaining conventional respectability— if not complete acceptance—in the mainline churches, Protestants and Catholic, in the shape of the charismatic movement. The new Pentecostals have no intention of breaking away from their parent bodies. This cult of the Paraclete proclaims the magnificent objective of renewing the faith of the larger church, bringing its membership back to religious fundamentals, and of changing the whole world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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What makes this a subject of curious interest to the behavioral scientist is that it appears to be in contradiction to the much advertised spread of secularism, materialism and scientism in the American society. It is as though we were witnessing a vast counter-culture movement among people who are not hippies or dropouts or crazies. The culmination of secularism was supposed to be the death of God and the ultimate disappearance of transcendent religion. The churches would be irrelevant. Whatever remained of religion, organized or private, would simply be a quaint and curious anachronism.

Simultaneously and paradoxically the sociologists have recognized the persistence of religion even among urbanized, sophisticated Westerners who are supposedly most affected by secularism. Perhaps they are haunted by the words of one of the classical founders of sociology, Emile Durkheim, who wrote that "there is something eternal in religion which is destined to survive all the particular symbols in which religious thought has successively enveloped itself." In other words, neither the Enlightenment, nor the Age of Reason, nor the contemporary Technological Age of universal problem-solving had witnessed the entombment of religion.

The Reasons

Aside from revelation and divine providence and supernatural grace—about which social scientists can make no empirical observations—why do people continue to believe in religion and practice it? At the risk of oversimplification, we can probably subsume the various explanations under the general theme of Victor Frankl's *Search for Meaning*. In the long run nothing else makes much sense. When the ultimate questions are asked, even science and philosophy do not have satisfactory answers. As Peter Berger says, "religion is the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly significant." What looks like absurdity and futility to the non-believer becomes reasonable and purposeful to the believer.

Everyone struggles in some way with the humanly inexplicable frustrations of life. At the level of personal experience, and seen from the individual point of view, says Milton Yinger, the quality of being religious implies two things: "first, a belief that evil, pain, bewilderment and injustice are fundamental facts of existence; and second, a set of practices and sanctified beliefs that express a conviction that man can ultimately be saved from these facts."

The delegates to the Second Vatican Council stated this perennial search for meaning and purpose as well as anybody else. "Men look to the various religions for answers to those profound mysteries of the human condition which, today even as in olden times, deeply stir the human heart: What is man? What is the meaning and purpose of our life? What is goodness and what is sin? What gives rise to our sorrows and to what intent? Where lies the path to true happiness?"

If religion is perennial, and if the search for life's meaning has been persistent throughout the centuries, why do we *now* experience this popular interest in a basic conservative and personal form of religiosity? Perhaps the cynic will say that there has been a loss of nerve among the American people. Our confidence and self-assurance have been shattered. Our belief in a constantly perfectible society has come into question. Even though we possess enormous resources, technological skill, the highest standard of living in the world, we are continuously beset by social problems and national failures.

Science and technology and rationality have not produced the promised Garden of Eden. By this time in history we are supposed to have licked all these problems. Our timetable has gone awry. We are disappointed by our inability to make all things come out right. As Professor David Harrell remarks, "the general American intellectual mood in the 1960s and 1970s was less dogmatic and less intellectually sure; curiosity and open-mindedness replaced scientific confidence and certainty."

What is peculiar about contemporary American disillusionment is that it is not limited to the victims of social oppression, the down-and-outers of society. It occurs also among the lucky ones. People who have everything that is supposed to make them happy are still dissatisfied and alienated and insecure. It was a commonplace observation that many of the so-called beat generation came from relatively affluent families. It is not a new idea to say that people can have too much of a good thing.

Religion gives purpose to a meaningless life. Religion is said also to be a source of comfort and assurance to the disillusioned and frustrated. Even Karl Marx, who was certain that religion would be unnecessary once exploitation and injustice has been removed in the classless society, appreciated religion as a temporary source of comfort and assurance. Marx is seldom quoted as saying that "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of an unspiritual situation." Even bourgeois can find the world heartless, oppressive and unspiritual.

Much has been written about the loneliness of modern man and about his quest for community. People seek meaning in their existence, and they need sources of reassurance, but both of these objectives seem difficult of attainment by oneself. Privatized religion has probably been exaggerated. The nature worshipper seldom goes to the mountain alone. The current trend to spiritual narcissism is a group grope. One of its

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characteristics is that it provides a sense of community and develops an espirit de corps. The participants exhibit loyalty to each other; and they help to overcome the feeling of alienation that seems typical of modern urban life.

Theologians may worry about what religious beliefs these people share. Probably the least common denominator of religious belief among them is a vague reference to the "Beyond," as Thomas O'Dea names it, a trust in some kind of higher power, some transcendent force in the universe. But if we look closer, the Americans we are talking about in this modern spiritual revival are overwhelmingly Christian. They claim to be followers of Christ. "That person is alone a Christian," says Hans Küng, "who tries to live his human, social and religious life in the light of Jesus Christ." Karl Rahner suggests that many good people are doing this even though they have never heard of Jesus, and he calls them "anonymous Christians."

This kind of vague description is consoling for many who are frustrated by theological arguments, and it may even have an ecumenical potential, but it is not satisfying to the new narcissists. It seems a reasonable hypothesis to suggest that a partial explanation of the current spiritual revival is a reaction to the fuzziness of the traditional Christian belief system. They see the larger denominations drifting toward modernism and liberalism, no longer holding tenaciously to the basics of the Apostles' Creed. They suspect a "watering down" of doctrines even by clergy and theologians.

This dilution of beliefs among the professional clergy, the teachers and leaders of organized religion, was seen with foreboding by Jeffrey Haden, who remarked that "Christian theology has been shaken at the foundation." It has been the clergy who are experiencing the "painful struggle to reinterpret the meaning of the Christian theological heritage." After his survey of the beliefs of 7,441 Protestant parish clergymen he saw the theological confusion and weakening of faith as the "dilemma" of contemporary Protestantism. "There is no consensus as to what is believed, as to what is central and what is peripheral, nor is there any clear authority to resolve the uncertainty."

The religious fundamentalists long ago recognized this confusion, this uncertainty, this lack of theological authority, and they started a protest movement to defend the orthodoxy of the Christian faith. The religious leaders who are now attracting an enormous following are also symbolic of protest. They speak with conviction and clarity and precision the truths they believe. Billy Graham says with simplicity and without apology: "I believe in the inspiration of the Holy Bible, the Virgin Birth, the resurrection of the Christ from the grave, the atonement of His blood of the sins of mankind, and the return of Christ to establish a kingdom on earth."

These are old-fashioned dogmas, brief, unambiguous statements. Born-again believers feel that they have been tampered with, watered down, explained away, until they are almost meaningless. The remarkable fact is that large numbers of people want them again, and want them in their stark and absolute originality. The preachers who are attracting the largest audiences are those who propose relatively simple dogma and speak with authority about it. The basic requirement is a firm belief in the mysteries of religion, not their explanation.

Another characteristic of the zealous religious movements is that they also put down rigid requirements for membership. The doors are open to all sinners, but not everybody is able or willing to meet the conditions of entering those doors. Dean Kelley places great emphasis on what he calls the "Power of the Gate," and he thinks that the Anabaptists and the Wesleyans had the correct formula that should be imitated today. (a) Be in no haste to admit members. (b) Test the readiness and preparation of would-be members. (c) Require continuing faithfulness. (d) Bear one another up in small groups. (e) Do not yield control to outsiders, nor seek to accommodate to their expectations.

These strict requirements help to constitute what Talcott Parsons would call a particularistic religion, that is, one in which the membership is socially exclusive and doctrinally elitist. By contrast, the large, mainline liberal churches have been universalistic. They are relatively lenient about doctrinal orthodoxy; almost anybody can join up and stay in. They expect members to contribute financial support, but they do not "clean" the membership rolls. Nevertheless, these universalistic churches are reputedly losing membership, or at least are not gaining new adherents.

Christians generally would maintain that it is necessary to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved from eternal damnation, that in the inscrutable providence of God, Jesus is in some manner the channel of redemption. But the contemporary revivalist goes further than this. He makes God stricter than most of us think He is (or ought to be). The acceptance of Christ as redeemer and savior must be accompanied by a series of other religious propositions, like a reliance on scriptural inspiration and the imminent second coming of Christ. In other words, the revivalist creed is precise and narrowly defined and allows for no theological variation or interpretation.

Southern Baptists exemplify this particularistic creed, and so do many of the neo-pentecostal charismatics in the mainline churches. Like the Adventists they put a special emphasis on belief in the imminent triumphant return of the Lord. They are strongly convinced that theirs is the road to eternal salvation. To make a decision for Christ—as the revivalist preacher calls it—is to give an affirmative answer to the question: are

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you saved? While the traditional baptism by water is still much a part of the rituals, there appears to be a greater contemporary emphasis on baptism in the Spirit. This signifies a personal conversion, a turning to the Lord, a strong and consoling conviction that one is a born-again Christian.

Who are these spiritual narcissists, and where are they coming from? Ernest Troeltsch thought such people were in the lower socio-economic class and relegated them to the "church of the disinherited." The various kinds of Holiness Churches, the Assemblies of God, the Church of the Nazarene, have regularly been assigned by sociologists to the lower classes of poor and uneducated people. The contemporary revivalism challenges this neat deprivation hypothesis as well as the equally questionable theory of unilinear upward mobility according to which the socially deprived people who are unchurched move first into a fundamentalist sect, then into the less conservative middle-class denomination, then into the upper-class liberal church, and then finally out into godless worldliness.

What seems to be happening now is a shifting of membership, an awakening of dormant Christians, and especially an attraction of middle-class Americans to an old-fashioned revivalistic brand of Christianity. Under the leadership of people like Oral Roberts, the late Kathryn Kuhlman and dozens of lesser lights, there has been a migration of the healing and deliverance ministry out of the rural revival tents into the Hollywood Bowl, Madison Square Garden, and especially onto the television channels. In the decade of the 1970s the healers and the charismatics are front stage center of the American religious enterprise.

The "outreach" of Billy Graham's revivalist crusades is to a typically middle-class audience, as are the people he persuades to come forward to make a decision for Christ. Oral Roberts, too, appeals to the general American public, especially in the excellently staged television productions he sponsors. The American businessman is ordinarily not typified as either religious or intellectual, but there is no question of the contemporary impact of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. College students, who are neither disinherited poor nor unchurched secularists, are putting their theological commitment into Bill Bright's Four Spiritual Laws of Christianity. The Campus Crusade for Christ has already reached out beyond the colleges. Its slogan has become: "Today the campus, tomorrow the world."

The charismatics are flourishing. The earlier Protestant Pentecostals, most of whom were ejected, or broke away from, parent congregations to establish their own religious sects, found many of their recruits among the poor and underprivileged. The newer Pentecostals have invaded, or have developed within, the mainline churches, including the Roman Catholic Church. Many of these people are fairly well-educated and are not from the ranks of the disinherited or the unchurched. Above all, they have no intention of breaking away from their mother church. Indeed, their internal mission is that the whole church will be renewed by the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecostals, however, do not find favor with fundamentalist preachers like Carl McIntyre and Billy Hargis. By and large, the Baptists and the Churches of Christ are hardened opponents of the charismatic movement, but even in some of their congregations there have appeared small cells of Spirit-filled members. The deep-dyed fundamentalists seem convinced that religious revival cannot be developed in the larger institutionalized churches. The new breed of Pentecostals in the conventional churches are out to prove that they are wrong.

It had been traditional among the revivalists, fundamentalists and Pentecostals that higher education leads to theological confusion and a loss of pure religion, that divine inspiration suffices for the preacher, and the Bible is the sole guideline of life for the true believer. Now we find some well-educated clergy among the Episcopalians, Lutherans and Presbyterians who are leaders in the new Pentecostal movement. Perhaps the most dramatic instance of this shift from ignorance was the charismatic conversion of some faculty members and students at Duquesne University, followed by the emergence of the Catholic charismatic renewal at the University of Notre Dame, the University of Michigan and other centers of higher learning. Theologians like Donald Gelpi, J. Massyngberde Ford and Kilian McDonnell, lend their weight of learning in support of the charismatics.

One of the criticisms of the new bourgeois religiosity, and the main reason why I call it narcissistic, is its tendency to withdraw from the serious social crises of the larger world. Even among their better-educated clergy one recognizes a conviction that the world is an evil place, American society is incorrigible, a den of iniquity, the realm of the Devil and his fallen angels. It is as though the Social Gospel of earlier years has lost its influence, and the social activists in the pulpits of the sixties have now been repudiated.

To say that the contemporary world is incorrigible is to pronounce a philosophy of despair, but only if one holds that the world can be reformed and saved by purely human means. Mass movements for social reform, welfare schemes of the federal government, the programs of socialism, the organized protests of ethnic and racial and feminist groups, are all to no avail. They are essentially ineffective because they rely solely on the intelligence and ingenuity of human beings. The conservative theology of salvation religion blends with a conservative social philosophy which holds that there is only one way to solve the social problems of our

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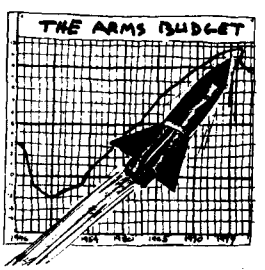
age, and that is by the spiritual conversion of individuals.

The born-again person must put everything in the hands of Christ who alone can fashion the good society. Stark and Glock remark somewhat harshly that "Evangelical Protestantism tends to take a miraculous view of social justice, that if all men are brought to Christ social evils will disappear through divine intervention. Thus they concentrate their energies on conversion and evangelism and largely ignore social issues." With this kind of attitude, the evangelical, the conservative, the Pentecostal, is eminently reasonable in his anticipation of the Second Coming.

It would be completely unfair and untrue to suggest that these contemporary American revivalists are selfish and heartless people, unmoved by the pain and suffering of their fellowmen. They do not subscribe to the triage ethic of the crowded lifeboat that identifies the secular narcissists. Indeed, theirs is Christ's lifeboat that is large enough to accommodate anyone who wants to climb aboard. They show a loving concern for their neighbor who is in trouble. Part of their attractiveness is that they offer love and solace to the confused and alienated people of our society. The corporal works of mercy, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, comforting the elderly, are manifestations of their service to the Lord through their service to His children. It may well be that this human warmth of a personal kind is a more powerful force for conversion than is their set of simple religious beliefs.

THE TREND TO BIGGER ARMS BUDGETS

MICHAEL T. KLARE



Remembrance of things past: Carter's 'NATO Budget'

Reading through the Pentagon's Fiscal 1979 budget request—the first prepared under President Carter's tutelage—is apt to stir up more than a faint twinge of nostalgia. Instead of the preoccupation with Third World radicalism that permeated more recent budget submissions, there are repeated warnings about Soviet missile capabilities and the Russian troop build-up in Eastern Europe. To complement the contrived "bomber gap" and "missile gap" of bygone days, there is what promises to be an equally fleeting danger: the killer-satellite gap. Finally, for those who saw in the Carter rhetoric of a "new world order" a de-emphasis on aging alliances—but didn't read the fine print or note Zbigniew Brzezinski's longstanding focus on European affairs—there is the surprise of the administration's increased engagement in the original postwar alliance, NATO.

For those Americans who can recall the Berlin Blockade and the subsequent Cold War confrontations, Carter's budget rationale will seem oddly familiar. "In the present international environment," Carter indicated on Jan. 23, "the most important measure of relative military strength is the balance that exists between the United States and its NATO allies, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies on the other." And, in presenting the budget to Congress, Defense Secretary Harold Brown argued that "the continued build-up of Warsaw Pact forces . . . not only warrants but requires" a corresponding build-up of U.S. forces in Europe.

To ensure that Western Europe will not be overrun by the Red Army, Carter proposes an eight percent increase in military spending, from $116.8 billion in Fiscal Year 1978 to a record $126 billion in FY 1979 (which begins on Oct. 1, 1978).* Even when these figures are adjusted for inflation, the Carter budget represents a "real" increase of three percent. In response to questions about the apparent discrepancy between these figures and Carter's campaign pledge to "reduce present defense expenditures by about $5 to $7 billion

*The figures cited represent the amounts Congress will be asked to appropriate for FY 1979, and are known as the "Total Obligational Authority" (TOA). Actual *outlays* in FY 1979 will actually be slightly less, since the TOA figures include funding for projects which may take several years to complete.

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annually," Brown noted that the administration request was $5.3 billion lower than President Ford's proposed FY 1979 budget, so that Carter's figures are actually "in accordance with his statements of 1976."

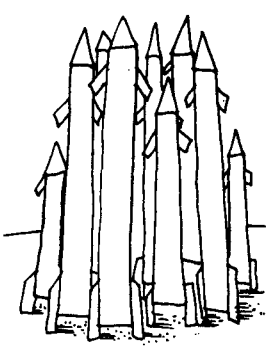
Despite such legerdemain, the new Pentagon budget is a whopping $9.2 billion bigger than last year's. Most of this increase, Carter announced, will be used to upgrade U.S. air and ground forces committed to NATO. Other budget categories will either remain at the same level (after allowing for inflation), or, in some cases, will be cut back marginally in order to ensure that sufficient funds will be available to "strengthen our ability . . . to repel any attack launched against NATO nations."

The emphasis on NATO is most evident in the breakdown of military spending by services. While the Navy and Air Force will receive only modest gains, about $1.2 billion (3.1 percent) in the case of the former and $1.7 billion (5 percent) in the case of the latter, the Army budget will grow by $2.5 billion (8.6 percent) to $31.3 billion. The increase for NATO-committed units is even more dramatic: 18 percent *in real terms* according to the President. These funds will be used to acquire additional tanks, troop-carrying helicopters, ground-support aircraft, and other hardware needed for a conventional (i.e., non-nuclear) war in Europe. When asked to comment on the relative absence of any "new initiatives" in weapons procurement comparable to the B-1 bomber or MX missile, Secretary Brown responded that "a billion dollar increase in Army procurement over the previous year is a real initiative. It may not be as glamorous as an MX or as a nuclear carrier, but it's very important to our combat capability."

After NATO, the administration seeks the biggest increase for "rapid-reaction" forces geared to intervention in the oil-rich Persian Gulf area. We must, Carter explained, "increase the firepower and mobility of the Army and Marine infantry divisions to provide greater flexibility to respond to threats outside the NATO area." The administration also proposes a modest increase in nuclear weapons spending, to counter the purported expansion of Russia's nuclear arsenal, and even includes a $73 million appropriation for research and development (R&D) on anti-satellite weapons.

Although the administration's budget submission contains mostly data on the nature and quantity of weapons sought for America's armed forces, it tells us a lot about the *type* of forces Washington seeks to deploy, and the contingencies for which they are being prepared. Before proceeding to an analysis of Carter's strategic outlook, therefore, it is worth breaking the budget into its principal components and describing the major items being sought in FY 1979.

Strategic forces: These are nuclear weapons and their delivery systems intended for use in an all-out war with the Soviet Union. Under the Carter budget, spending on these forces will be increased by about five percent, from $9.3 billion in FY 1978 to $9.8 billion in 1979. Although these figures suggest little change in the rate of nuclear spending, the new budget actually incorporates some significant shifts in strategic planning. Whereas the Ford administration had anticipated expenditures of several billions of dollars to begin production of the B-1 bomber, the Carter administration seeks no funds for B-1 production (some $100 million is programmed for R&D) but proposes a significant speedup in the production of air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), which are thought to have a better chance of penetrating Soviet air defenses and striking targets deep within the Russian heartland. The administration is also requesting $158 million (up from $134 million in 1978) for advanced development of the MX



intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which is slated to have greater accuracy and yield than existing U.S. ICBM's and thus is thought to be more effective in destroying "hardened" Soviet missile sites.

These moves, together with the administration's emphasis on space warfare, suggest a preference for improved *war-fighting* capabilities rather than for largely symbolic instruments of power such as that represented by the B-1 bomber. Given the American lead in such critical areas as missile accuracy, reliability, and multiple-warhead (MIRV) technology, this shift is sure to be interpreted by Moscow as indicative of American intentions to acquire an aggressive first-strike nuclear capability—thus complicating the task of concluding a new strategic arms limitation agreement (SALT-II) while laying the groundwork for a new spiral in the thermonuclear arms race.

The Navy: As in the case of strategic weapons, the administration's naval budget exhibits a marked preference for war-fighting capabilities over largely symbolic programs. In naval terms, this translates as reduced spending on aircraft carriers and accelerated produc-

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tion of smaller, cheaper escort vessels. Although the carrier has long served as America's principal "forward-deployed" symbol of military power, it has in recent years become increasingly vulnerable to Soviet anti-ship missiles while its price tag ($1 billion, for starters) has risen astronomically. In line with these realities, Secretary Brown on Jan. 26 ordered the Navy to develop new war plans envisioning a reduced role for U.S. carriers in future conflicts involving front-line Soviet forces. At the same time, Brown has placed renewed emphasis on the Navy's "sea control" mission—i.e., its ability to protect U.S. merchant vessels and supply ships against naval attack on the high seas. Such a policy obviously reflects the growing U.S. dependence on imported raw materials—particularly energy sources—and is consistent with the Carter administration's emphasis on support of NATO, since control of the Atlantic sea lanes would obviously be critical in any prolonged war in Europe. These priorities are manifest in the FY 1979 naval shipbuilding budget, which provides no funds for aircraft carriers but which includes $1.5 billion for procurement of eight FFG-class escort vessels.

The Air Force: Although the Air Force will receive approximately the same amount next year as in FY 1978 for aircraft procurement—$6.9 billion in FY 1979 as compared to $6.3 billion this year—there are significant shifts in the breakdown of such spending. Whereas during the Ford administration the bulk of such funds went to the B-1 bomber and the F-15 *Eagle* swing-wing fighter, Carter is placing greater emphasis on less sophisticated but more economical systems such as the F-16 Air Combat Fighter, the A-10 close-support aircraft and the ubiquitous cruise missile. Both the F-16 and the A-10 are being described as NATO-oriented weapons: the F-16 is actually being "co-produced" by a consortium of U.S. and European firms, and is intended to replace the aging F-104 fighters in existing NATO inventories; the A-10, a relatively unsophisticated plane by Air Force standards, is armed with the General Electric GAU-8/A 30-mm. gun which is designed to cripple Soviet tanks and armored vehicles. The Air Force will also receive $198 million for the EF-111A electronic-warfare aircraft (for jamming enemy radars) and $416 million for procurement of the air-launched cruise missile (another $238 million is programmed for ALCM research and development).

Army: As suggested earlier, the Army is the Big Winner in FY 1979. Army spending on new weapons will jump by a whopping 25 percent—from $5.3 billion in FY 1978 to $6.6 billion next year. Most of this increase will be used to improve Army capabilities in a "high-threat" environment—i.e., Europe or the Middle East, where potential adversaries are likely to be armed with the latest Soviet weapons. A major beneficiary of this buildup is the Chrysler Corporation, which will receive $411 million for procurement of 508 M-60

DOUBLE TEAMING ON DEFENSE

A perennial problem in devising military budgets is arriving at accurate intelligence about the strength and motives of the adversary. In 1976 controversy in Washington over this problem resulted in a competitive Team A-Team B tactic, whereby the judgments of the official U.S. intelligence community (CIA, Pentagon, etc.)—Team A—were brought into competition with the analysis of three *ad hoc* outside groups—Team B—on Soviet strategic capabilities and objectives.

On paper, the competitive analysis idea seemed a good one. As it developed, the experiment became an exercise for arriving at a worst-case reading of Soviet intentions and strength. Such is one conclusion to be derived from a recent report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. In the words of Colorado Senator Gary Hart, "the use of selected outside experts was little more than a camouflage for a political effort to force the national intelligence estimate to take a more bleak view of the Soviet strategic threat."

Team B, the "competition," was headed by Prof. Richard Pipes of Harvard University's Russian Research Center. The Senate report said this team "reflected the views of only one segment of the spectrum," namely a conservative approach toward the Soviet Union. It faulted Team B for one-sidedness. Earlier there were disclosures that information had been leaked to the press designed to undermine the views of Team A. The report said "it has not determined who was responsible for the leaks," but sources have identified them with Team B.

Team A was likewise found to be open to criticism. "The intelligence agencies were cast inaccurately in the role of 'doves,'" according to the report, "when they in fact represented a broad spectrum of views." Also, "they needlessly allowed analytic mismatches, by sending relatively junior specialists into the debating arena against prestigious and articulate B Team authorities."

But if implementation of the experiment is to be faulted, the problem may go back to motivation. The Team A-Team B operation stemmed from a feeling of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board that national intelligence estimates were too optimistic with respect to Soviet strategic strength. Gerald Ford was President at the time. President Carter has since abolished the board.

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heavy tanks and another $497 million to begin production of the new XM-1 Main Battle Tank, the Army's super-weapon of the 1980's and 1990's. The Army will also spend $307 million on the Raytheon *Patriot* surface-to-air missile, $225 million on the European-designed *Roland* air-defense missile system, and $150 million for the General Dynamics *Stinger* shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile. And, to improve its mobility in "brushfire" wars or other police operations, the Army will acquire 78 Bell AH-1S *Cobra* attack helicopters and 129 Sikorsky UH-60 *Black Hawk* troop-carrying helicopters for a combined cost of $530 million.

This breakdown of proposed Pentagon spending provides us with some important insights into the administration's strategic thinking. First, it is apparent that Harold Brown is fully committed to former Defense Secretary (now Energy Secretary) James R. Schlesinger's "Counterforce Doctrine," which holds that the United States must be capable of destroying hardened Soviet missile sites in the event of a "limited nuclear war" with the USSR. Although Carter originally stated in his campaign speeches that a limited nuclear war was an "impossibility" since even a minor nuclear exchange would probably ignite an all-out war, Brown's decision to proceed with the MX and other "hard-target killers" implies a turnaround to the Schlesinger position.

Next, we see a consistent preference for conventional forces which have a potential military *use* in future conflicts, rather than for forces whose major purpose is to justify the procurement of costly weapons systems. The A-10 attack plane is not nearly as glamorous as the super-sophisticated *Eagle*, for instance, but at $5.5 million each it would probably provide a lot more "use value" in any prolonged conventional war than the $16.7 million F-15. Much the same could be said for the FFG escort vessel when compared to the $1 billion-plus carrier, and other weapons sought by the Carter Administration.

NATO Emphases

We can also see that the President's verbal commitments to NATO are being backed up by a real shift in budgetary priorities. Although all previous administrations had made similar commitments to NATO, Nixon and Ford gave preferential treatment to the Navy and Air Force at budget time, while the Army—which would have to do most of the real fighting in any future European war—was given a smaller share of the pie. Carter, on the other hand, has vetoed the B-1 bomber and a new aircraft carrier while providing extra funds for frontline Army units.

Why this sudden preoccupation with NATO? And why prepare for intervention in the Middle East when we are supposedly working so hard to find a peaceful solution to the area's most critical problems? The budget submission does not really answer these questions, and we are faced with the more subjective task of reconstructing the administration's strategic outlook on the basis of newspaper leaks, general policy statements and inference from budgetary allocations.

To begin this process, it is necessary to return briefly to the world inherited by U.S. policymakers upon the collapse of the American intervention in Vietnam. Although most Americans probably welcomed the decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Indochina, many top policymakers were fearful that domestic opposition to interventionism would diminish the credibility of *future* U.S. efforts to protect its key interests overseas. These leaders viewed the Vietnam debacle as the consequence of *miscalculation*—as an error of means, but not of ends—and therefore sought new, more "cost-effective" strategies that would assure continued U.S. control of key interests abroad without provoking widespread public opposition. And while there has been much debate in elite circles over the optimum configuration of such strategies, there has been very little dispute over the *need* for them.

Out of this debate, several major themes have emerged:

1. The United States must not squander scarce political and economic resources in prolonged "police" operations on the fringes of the imperium, but must conserve its resources for defense of the critical "heartland"—Europe, the Middle East, the Pacific, and the Western Hemisphere. This outlook also assumes that any future commitments of U.S. military resources will be commensurate with the perceived value of the interests in question. Out of such thinking came the calculation that the Angolan conflict did not merit direct U.S. intervention, but that any uprising in the oil-rich Persian Gulf *would*. The emphasis on such "core areas" as Europe and the Middle East also accounts for the apparently backward-looking nature of the Carter budget, since America's postwar thrust towards global supremacy began with the Truman Doctrine and the commitment to NATO.

2. In areas where the United States is *not* prepared, for whatever reason, to act as the immediate police power, we would convert selected local powers into *regional gendarmes* that could serve as our surrogate in any needed counterinsurgency exercises. This principle, known formally as the "Nixon Doctrine," assumes that the United States will provide these regimes with sufficient arms, training and financial support to ensure the success of such missions. Thus Iran has become a sort of "mini-superpower" in the Persian Gulf area thanks to deliveries of America's most advanced arms, and Indonesia has used its American-supplied weapons to overcome the independence movement in East Timor. It is this principle that almost inevitably transforms Carter's talk of a ceiling on arms sales into a series of

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accounting gimmicks that would make New York politicians blush.

3. In those "core areas" where America's most valuable overseas assets are concentrated, we would *strengthen* U.S. combat capabilities in order to ensure that the Vietnam withdrawal would not be interpreted as implying a lack of "will" to defend more fundamental interests. And since America's capacity to defend these interests rests, ultimately, on our ability to "stare down" the Soviets in a crisis, there is a shared feeling that we must come out stronger in those measurements of military power—the strategic arms balance and the NATO-Warsaw Pact balance—which would be controlling in any superpower conflict. Hence the emphasis on new Counterforce weapons which appear to threaten the survivability of Russia's second-strike retaliatory capability, and the preference for *usable* military power in the NATO theater.

Although these three principles have been followed by all three post-Vietnam administrations, Carter's is the first to be in a position to implement them fully. Nixon spent most of his first term trying to postpone the inevitable in Indochina, and Ford had to deal with the immediate consequences of the U.S. pullout. But Carter entered the White House with a clear, if somewhat contradictory, mandate to "heal the wounds of war" and to reassert America's "greatness" in the world arena. The military budget illustrates how he has chosen to do this. First, the question of significant reductions in Pentagon spending, so endlessly discussed in the 1976 campaign, has simply vanished from consideration. Second, NATO is to be resuscitated and conventional weapons emphasized.

The factors involved in this concentration on NATO are many. The fear of Eurocommunism is certainly one. The fact that Europe is not only an economic partner but, more and more, an economic rival is another. The politics of NATO may provide a kind of leverage that the dollar can no longer guarantee. Conventional forces in Europe would, of course, be used in the Middle East; Secretary Brown has revived the ominous warnings about protecting oil supplies, and an actual intervention there or in the Persian Gulf is conceivable. But the least of these factors is the danger of a Soviet invasion, which knowledgeable analysts agree is less than negligible. Nonetheless, the administration is beginning to rekindle fears of a Soviet assault on Western Europe, a specter that even the most ardent opponents of U.S. intervention in Vietnam might be hesitant to question. The NATO revival, with its evocations of the original Truman Doctrine, does not signal any break with Cold War globalism nor promise any relief from our ever-consuming military establishment. On the contrary, the Pentagon is gearing up a campaign, announced by Secretary Brown on February 2, to raise the defense budget by *another $56 billion* over the next five years.

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THE STAGE

"I am not and never have been involved in any international conspiracy or any other kind, and do not know anyone who is," Paul Robeson wrote in *Here I Stand* in 1958.

"I might not have caught the man as you would like to see him," Phillip Hayes Dean answered his critics in 1977. "But you have no right to say that I am involved in some kind of conspiracy to distort Paul Robeson." [*Washington Post*, Dec. 7]

The irony implicit in the juxtaposition of these two quotations is not the only one dogging Dean's new play, *Paul Robeson*. It is at once a commercial property and a celebratory occasion. Don Gregory, a producer who has successfully packaged *Clarence Darrow* and Emily Dickinson (*The Belle of Amherst*) for theatrical consumption, must have assumed that Robeson was a natural, particularly for a theater in which the black audience has become so important a component. In Dean, whose *Freeman* and *The Sty of the Blind Pig* have established him as one of our most promising playwrights, and in James Earl Jones, one of the best actors on the American stage, Gregory found artists with more than impeccable professional qualifications. As Dean put it when he crashed the press conference called by the Washington D.C. Committee to End Crimes Against Paul Robeson, he was as black as anyone in the room. The original director—Charles Nelson Reilly, who had staged *The Belle of Amherst* —was replaced during the pre-Broadway tour by Lloyd Richards, who is not simply a distinguished director but a distinguished black director. The ethnic auspices were good, then, but the play has been troubled by controversy since it first took to the stage in Louisville last Fall. Protests followed the production from Louisville to Chicago to Philadelphia to Washington and finally to New York, where a two-page advertisement, signed by a group of artists and political leaders reads like *Who's Who in Black America,* appeared in *Variety* [Jan. 11].

Paul Robeson, Jr., is the chief force behind the attack on the play. He has complained, perhaps with justification, about the commercial exploitation of his father, but the group protests have taken a strongly ideational tone. At the Washington press conference, the Committee insisted that Robeson was being depicted as a "naive, ignoble giant" and that such a presentation followed a pattern in which black "giants" were regularly "reduced from revolutionary heroic dimensions to manageable sentimentalized size." The advertisement in *Variety* called the play "a tissue of invention and distortions" which falsified the man and his life "to create 'acceptable' motivations to soften the genuine ones." Gregory insisted [*New York Times*, Jan. 11] that the *Variety* ad represents reactions to an early script which is not at all the present *Paul Robeson*. It would take someone a great deal more knowledgeable than I am about the details of Robeson's life to award points in this contest for the image of the dead hero. The sounds of the 1940s and 1950s are loud in my ear as I remember all the labels he was once forced to wear—hero, martyr, villain, dupe—and find myself wondering who wants to recreate Robeson into what shape and for what purpose right now. I distrust poster-sized people with "revolutionary heroic dimensions," but I understand the need for them. I admire dramatically valid human beings, full of contradiction and complexity, but I cannot find such a character in *Paul Robeson*.

Neither poster nor person, the Paul Robeson of Dean's play is a victim of genre. The one-character play, when it is based on an historical figure, seems doomed from the beginning. Unless the playwright can find a shape to impose on his protagonist, the play will become, as *Paul Robeson* does, a collection of bits—anecdotes, turns, speeches—tied, if sometimes tenuously, to the facts of the hero's life. James Earl Jones is giving an impressive performance, moving from narrator to actor, making abrupt changes of mood and tone, playing with the audience and to the audience. I came away with a renewed sense of Jones's skill but no very clear image of Robeson. The outlines are there. Using the 1973 Carnegie Hall "Salute to Paul Robeson" as the frame in which to set his mini-biography, Dean offers in the first act a Robeson who makes his way through the intricacies of racial prejudice—at Rutgers, at Columbia Law School, in New York of the 1920s—and finds success as an actor and singer. He is pictured at this point as a man who can use either manipulation or direct confrontation to protect himself, but it is not until the second act that we see him turn from the personal to the public, become the artist as political activist. Jarred out of his comfortable English life by a visit to Berlin in the 1930s, he becomes first an outspoken anti-fascist, then a crusader for black rights and labor causes, then a victim, a martyr, a non-person, finally a resurrected myth figure like the Joe Hill he keeps singing about.

In the first part of *Paul Robeson,* I am not so much bothered by the violations of chronology, when I see them, as by the exemplary neatness of the acted anecdotes: Paul outsmarting the dean, winning over the coach, succumbing to marriage. In the second half I have difficulty less with the motivation than with the presentation. I do not know what the protesters

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mean by "acceptable" motivation unless they mean that white liberals would rather see a black man become a political activist over the death of a Jewish dwarf than over the wrongs done his own people, but I doubt that that is true. Besides, the second act presents both his anger over black wrongs and his specific political position; the lines on "my belief in the principles of scientific socialism" seem to have gone directly from *Here I Stand* into the play. The difficulty here is that too many of the speeches and scenes—singing at the Russian border, visiting wounded soldiers during the Spanish Civil War—come across as conventional leftist rhetoric and gesture.

Even if he wants to take Robeson at that level, the play finally denies the possibility by borrowing the Othello image from Edwin P. Hoyt's biography, which was subtitled "An American Othello" and ended by seeing Robeson as one who loved not wisely, but too well. As both *Freeman* and *If You Can't Sing, They'll Make You Dance*, which was recently staged off-off Broadway, indicate, Dean is fascinated by the kind of man whose rhetorical sense of himself is belied by his ineffectuality, and I began to feel that character invade *Paul Robeson* as the play turned back to Othello. If the rejection of the life implicit in the celebration is really in *Paul Robeson*, then the protesters have some grounds for complaint. My complaint, I suspect, is that such a play about a hero-dupe-martyr might make a real American tragedy and that Dean might be the man to write it, but that *Paul Robeson* cannot be that play because, whatever the protesters say, it really tries to celebrate Paul Robeson as an American hero.

GERALD WEALES

KEEPING IN TOUCH

THE SCREEN

Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* is a touching film, literally. It's a film made out of, and for, our touchy-feely culture—the culture of group therapy and group grope, of EST, TM, and (close) encounter therapy. That's what the third kind of encounter is, of course: "actual contact" with extra-terrestrial beings. But Spielberg's film takes that criterion more literally, or perhaps more metaphorically, than the Air Force does. Remember "Con III," that third stage of cosmic consciousness described a few years ago in *The Greening of America* by Charles Reich, the Timothy Leary of Yale Law School? Well, Con III is

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the state which third encounters induce. Such encounters are only available to people who are ready for Con III like Jill Guiler (Melinda Dillon) and, especially, Roy Neery (Richard Dreyfuss). Even Roy's name tells us he's ready. He's not just ready for a near—i.e., close—encounter. He's ready for one that's diminutively, affectionately near. He's Neery (It's such a cutesy name, like hippy, or Yalie, as Charles Reich refers to himself.) Roy is the kind of guy who never gets anywhere in this world, but in this movie he gets some place even better. He gets *out of* this world altogether.

What puts Roy and Jill in touch with each other is a UFO sighting, but what they have in common are slightly kooky personalities. This is apparent right away with Jill, who is clearly part of the love-and-beads set. Bra-less and wearing thread-bare, cut-off jeans constantly, even when she goes to bed, Jill lives alone with her son Barry (Cary Guffey) on a remote farm. There she does a little gardening on the side, but mostly cultivates her talents as an artist. Roy, on the other hand, seems a pretty straight type. He is a lineman for the county—how much straighter can you get than to be out of a Glen Campbell song?—and he lives with his wife and three or four kids in a housing development in the suburbs of Muncie, Indiana. But as soon as he gets mixed up with UFOs, Roy begins to get freaky too. First he loses his job with the power company, then he starts growing a beard and thinking the Air Force is full of bullshit. Finally he leaves his wife and kids and goes on the road with Jill, looking for more UFOs.

There is obviously a whole lot of syncretism going on in *Close Encounters*, which must be the reason for its extraordinary appeal. For one thing it is, like *Star Wars*, made up of bits and pieces out of all kinds of other movies. Predictably, some of them are recent science-fiction films. In *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, for instance, the big crisis for Candy Clark is also being touched, literally and intimately, by a lover from outer space; and in *The Forbin Project* when two computers have to learn each other's language, the effect is much the same as when a computer plays a duet with a visiting spaceship in *Close Encounters*. In both films mere man stands on the sidelines in awe because, as a scientist in *Close Encounters* remarks, "It's the first day of school, fella." *Close Encounters* rips off a whole cycle of sci-fi myth from *Star Wars* all the way back to *2001* (not very far back, admittedly, but the tremendous pull of the future always tends to shrink the sense of the past in sci-fi).

The novelty of *Close Encounters*, however, is that it also ranges far afield of sci-fi in what it draws upon. The sources reconciled in Spielberg's film run a gamut not just from *2001* to *Star Wars*, but from sci-fi to *The Exorcist* and from *avant-garde* classics like Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* to Walt Disney kitsch. At one point the extra-terrestrials invade Jill's home like the demons in *The Exorcist*, invisibly. They rumble in the walls and quake the furniture as they move about. At another point toy police cars from *Scorpio Rising* also cruise into *Close Encounters*, which has made Anger even angrier than usual. And little touches of Disney magic are sprinkled all around, from the song "When You Wish Upon a Star" to a space vehicle that is nothing more than an impish blip of light. It behaves just like a mite of pixie dust falling from the fairy godmother's wand in *Cinderella* or scattered to the winds in *Peter Pan*.

But it must be in its ability to syncretize social myths, rather than merely cinematic ones, that *Close Encounters* affects such a vast audience. If Jill is something of a hippy, for example, she is something of a divorcee—or divorcy—as well. She is a fusion of two recent American sub-cultures that usually seem to us pretty different. Here she is living as if she were in a commune, yet doing so chastely and in essential America, in Muncie, Indiana, rather than out on the fringe in southern California or Canada. Like Roy, she is at the same time both a drop-out and a graduate of the silent majority. Their escapade together builds some new castles in the air too, for out of the dissolution of his conventional family, the old nuclear family, comes the new atomic family of him, her and her fatherless son, Barry. This new family has no sexual hang-ups; in fact, it has no sex. It is other-worldly in its focus, listening to deep space. It is held together, where Roy's old-fashioned family failed, by its belief in UFOs. Maybe, the movie seems to say, everything that's going wrong in America will work out for the best after all. Maybe there's a new day dawnin'!

For all their similarity, though, Roy and Jill are not finally so compatible as they seem, nor does their relationship break the new ground it at first appears to. When we meet Roy near the film's opening, in fact, we are given the impression that it isn't Jill, but Barry who is Roy's true soul mate. The night that the UFOs touch down in Indiana, Barry is awake even before the force field that they create has inadvertently set all his motorized toys scurrying about the house. And at the beginning of the next scene, we find Roy living in essentially the same boy's world as he tinkers with the electric trains which are his hobby. What Roy and Barry share is an uncanny intuition for technology. It shows in Barry's coming awake even before the presence of the UFOs has set off all his toys, and in Roy's performance at the generating plant to which he's called because of the blackouts the UFOs cause. It shows, too, in the fact that neither of them is afraid in the presence of the space ship's enormous technological power. On the contrary, even little Barry, like Roy, immediately and instinctively pursues the UFOs every chance he gets. This is not a capacity that Jill shares as well, as we also see that first night when the UFOs touch down.

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While Barry is already up and exploring the electromagnetic field which has invaded the house unseen, Jill is still asleep, dead to this presence to which Barry is so acutely tuned. She has in fact fallen asleep with the TV on.

Beyond the syncretism represented in the film by Jill and her relationship with Roy lies this even more optimistic promise of a reconciliation between nature, particularly human nature, and technology. In the very first scene of the film, before we have met either Jill or Barry or Roy, we meet a French scientist named Lacombe (François Truffaut) who has been called to the Mexican desert because an entire squadron of fighter planes reported missing in 1945 has suddenly reappeared. Even though it's only the first scene, the film builds up a pretty good head of drama and suspense as Lacombe finds that the plane gauges respond when tapped, ignition switches click on smartly, and when the starter buttons are pushed, despite having literally disappeared off the face of the earth for thirty years, the engines immediately spring to life. Just to make sure that none of us miss the point, the space ship has dropped off these antique planes in mint condition in the middle of an automobile junkyard. Whoever it is that's out there, in space, they are obviously able to move *with* technology, not against it like us. An ability to do the same, rare for an earthling, must be what they find attractive in Roy.

(*The first of two parts*)

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ROBERT F. SAYRE
Princeton University, $14.50

Just about everything Henry David Thoreau wrote was autobiographical. *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* speaks in the first person of a journey he took with his brother; *Walden*, again in the first person, is concerned with his famous experiment in living; and fourteen of the twenty volumes of the 1906 edition of his works are taken up by his journals. Even his short piece, "Civil Disobedience," affirms its doctrine on the basis of what "I" did and why "I" did it.

Yet Thoreau the man who had parents, siblings, hopes of marriage, and petty jealousies eludes us far more effectively than any of his contemporaries. The furtive Hawthorne who lurks behind the ironic narrators of his novels and stories, told chiefly in the third person, has been sounded, and Emerson's misreputation as an aloof Yankee quickly disintegrates when his writings are placed in the context of his journals and letters as the late Stephen Whicher did in his excellent anthology. But the "I" of Thoreau, omnipresent is also omnimaking. It is an aesthetic creation, a persona that lacks personality but possesses a tough and flexible consistency derived from its creator's strict attention to his sense of the real that resides behind the apparent of everyday actuality.

"With thinking we may be beside ourselves in a sane sense," Thoreau wrote. "By a conscious effort of the mind we can stand aloof from actions and their consequences; and all things, good and bad, go by us like a torrent. We are not wholly involved in Nature." Since his writings come from a such a conscious effort of the mind, the "I" he constantly offers us is, in this sense, not himself but beside himself.

> Walden, *therefore, is the record of the vision quest of a Transcendental savage, and I would like to study it in this way, rather than in reference to the European, Puritan, or Emersonian traditions to which it has often been compared. . . . It is a white quest. But it bears comparison with Indian ones because the white fictions of Indian life helped inspire it. Sometimes it penetrates beyond these fictions into truth.*
>
> —Thoreau and the American Indians

Faced with an author who is thus always at home but steps out the door to talk with you rather than letting you in, Walter Harding in his monumental researches surrounded Thoreau. His *The Days of Henry David Thoreau* is a documented account of the outer man, an invaluable assemblage of first-hand reports of Thoreau's movements. It provides us with an everyday Thoreau with which to envelop the missing man who produced the great writings. Perhaps this outer man and the created "I" are all we can or should know of Thoreau, but Richard Lebeaux sees a way in. Thoreau, the man, he believes, grew from the identity crisis of Thoreau the adolescent. Such a crisis occurred in Thoreau, he knows, because it occurs in all men, and so he places Erik H. Erikson's model

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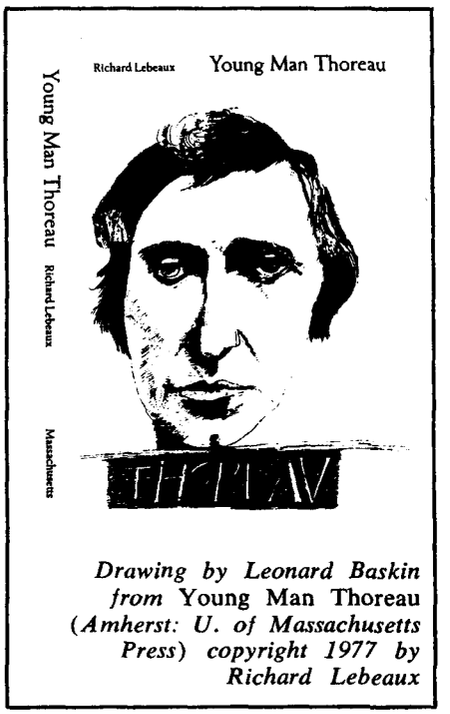
of such crises over the known record as a correction grid is placed over a machine-graded examination and reads us the result. If this sounds mechanical it is because the early chapters of his study are so. Before Lebeaux arrives at the point where Thoreau's recoverable career generates its own progress his book is dominated by the pattern to which Thoreau must be fitted and the result is unpleasant.

Here, for example, are the sequence of connections in two representative paragraphs from the early chapters; the numbers indicate successive sentences. (1) It can be hypothesized that . . . (2) it can suggest . . . (3) If . . . could . . then he might have . . . (4) Perhaps . . . could . . . (5) If . . . would have. And another paragraph: (1) if not actually . . . may have been. (2) So it may have . . . (3) But I would contend . . . (4) Also there may have . . . (5) it might have seemed.

Hypothesis upon hypothesis further weakened by the introduction of that element which most characteristically gives Erikson's method a strength beyond theorizing, attention to the interplay of personality with historical conditions. These latter are at least known, but what is one to make of Lebeaux's emphasis upon the fact that Thoreau was born into "transitional times"? Surely Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards before Thoreau and Mark Twain and Henry James after him were born into transitional times also. What should be a particularized historical location for Lebeaux's necessarily schematic analysis becomes general as well.

The book outlives this rocky beginning and a figure does emerge, thanks chiefly to Lebeaux's astute reading of some of the poems in strict biographical terms. From this I learned something stronger than conjecture. I would like to read a fuller treatment of Thoreau by Lebeaux when he arrives at the point at which he can internalize whatever methodology he adopts and can devote his explicit attention to the incisive reading of the record. The latter he does very well.

All students of Thoreau know that a number of "Indian Notebooks" (variously numbered and catalogued) are among his remains and believe that he was planning a book about the Indians at the time of his death. But Robert F. Sayre has paid close attention to the matter and has serious doubts about it. As he recognizes, one cannot prove the non-existence of an intent with the certainty that one can prove its existence, but certainly he has qualified himself beyond others to arrive at an informed opinion, and, on balance, he suspects that Thoreau's "Indian Notebooks" were a resource for his writings on all the subjects with which he was concerned rather than pointed specifically toward an Indian book. It is difficult to disagree with him—even though to agree is to surrender a cherished myth about a great writer who has left us myths in lieu of personality—and yet, of course, it is impossible to accept the case as proved.



Drawing by Leonard Baskin from Young Man Thoreau *(Amherst: U. of Massachusetts Press) copyright 1977 by Richard Lebeaux*

The body of Sayre's book, however, is not directly concerned with this question—he takes it up at the outset and rounds it off at the close—but with the use Thoreau actually did make of Indian material and it is always lively and suggestive. Although he qualifies his contention that Thoreau sometimes parallels Indian myths in his treatment of such matters as creation, still I think that like Thoreau himself Sayre has "Indians on the brain" and overlooks far more likely sources for Thoreau's treatment. But the compensations provided by his saturation with Indian material are quite marvelous and he enriches the already heady experience of reading *Walden* by, for example, bringing the Indian view of animals to bear on Thoreau's description of them.

The heart of the book, I think, is Sayre's very provocative interpretation of the most notorious bit of Indian history in Thoreau, his retelling of the Hannah Dustan story in *A Week*. Sayre sees this white woman's resort to murder and scalping for the ostensible purpose of escape from and revenge upon the Indians who murdered her infant as a metaphor of the artist's alienation from nature. In the context of the Dustan story, Thoreau wrote, "The talent of composition is very dangerous,—the striking out the heart of life at a blow, as the Indian takes off a scalp." Sayre argues that as Hannah Dustan imitated the Indians when she killed, so, in Thoreau's mind, all imitators—artists such as himself most prominently—are killers. "To imitate and to civilize," says Sayre, "to civilize and become estranged from nature were all the same."

I am not sure I agree. I am inclined, that is, to argue that Thoreau's sense of the savagery of the artistic act is approving and that he views the wildness of the artist's attachment to nature as a form of divine cannibalism—the highest tribute to the worshipped object is its ritual slaughter and ingestion. But Sayre knows Indians and Thoreau's savagism as most of us do not and the value of his book is that he not only informs us but drives us back to a reexamination of our attitudes by compelling us back to the inescapable center of our attention, the art rather than the artist.

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The Resilient Church

AVERY DULLES

Doubleday, $7.95

EUGENE HILLMAN

By its title and sub-title, and because the author himself prefers the model of the church as sign, this book promises to deal with the Christian outreach to the whole of humanity. It is an effort, we are told in the introduction, "to appraise and carry forward the theological work of Catholic ecclesiology in the decade since the Council." What is actually delivered is something else. Selected issues are discussed with Dulles's usual clarity of style and attention to relevant historical antecedents. But the overall vision of the church offered here, and the impatience reflected in several of the chapters, leave me uneasy.

With a sub-title like "The Necessity and Limits of Adaptation," one might have expected to find a treatment of the church's concern with the New Testament's *oikumene*, understood as the whole earth: the ethnically and culturally diverse peoples to whom the church is sent, from whom the church's members are called, and without whom the church cannot begin to be a universally intelligible sign. But there is no wrestling here with the incarnational theme of the church's necessity to take on the cultural flesh of these peoples in the non-Western world where, after all, most of humankind actually lives. Nor is there any consideration of the "wider ecumenism," understood as the church's belated dialogue with the followers of the religions that still serve most of humanity.

This book is concerned with a different question How resilient are the church's Roman forms, structures and doctrines; and how much further can they be stretched to accommodate changing conditions among various Western peoples? Adaptation is thus narrowly conceived with reference only to selected "Inner-Catholic problems," especially the tension between the church and the secularizing forces of

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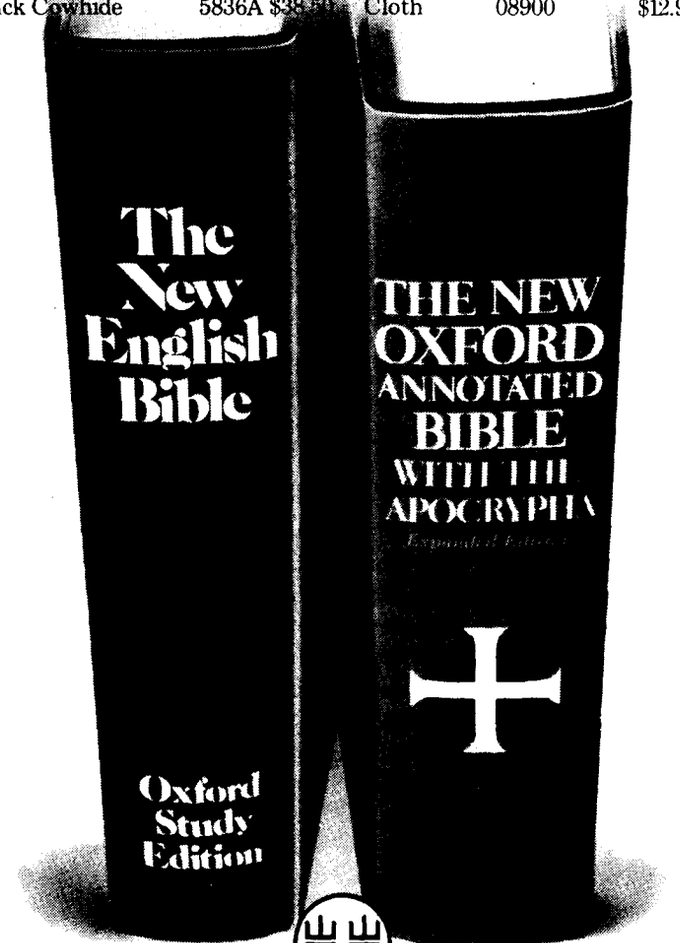

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 1478 1978 Publishers of Fine Books for Five Centuries

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the modern Western world. The focus is more on the limits than on the necessity of adaptation. "Unlike certain liberals," the author is "deeply concerned that the church, in its efforts at adaptation, should avoid imitating the fashions of the non-believing world . . ." He is also critical of "those conservatives who . . . balk at adapting the doctrines and the institutions of the church to the times in which we live . . ." But the principal thrust is "against those liberals whose programs of adaptation are based on an uncritical acceptance of the norms and slogans of Western secularist ideologies."

Who are they? The same straw men, it seems, that were set up and toppled by the Hartford Appeal in 1975. In a chapter, longer by one-third than any of the other eight chapters in this book, the Hartford Appeal is vigorously defended. Using Karl Rahner's notion of "latent heresy," and guided by James Hitchcock's list of "twenty-six heretical attitudes characterizing radical Catholicism," Dulles begins to sound a bit like an aging Jacques Maritain or a declining Dietrich von Hildebrand. To be sure, there is always and everywhere a need for Christians to examine critically their contemporary cultural perceptions and presuppositions, and even at times to "ferret out and denounce the prevalent forms of idolatry." But the long history of the church, and Dulles's own fine writings on the reinterpretation of doctrine, touched upon even in chapters three and five of this volume, should remind us of the dangers involved in such an exercise. Nevertheless, apparently feeling like one of "a harassed band of moderates . . . hooted at from both sides," Dulles tries to show that the target of the Hartford Appeal was not straw men, but some well known scholars. David Tracy, Gregory Baum, Gabriel Moran, Leslie Dewart, and Piet Schooenberg are among those named. The argumentation is much too thin, but some good questions are raised and bold challenges are offered.

My greatest reservation concerning this book arises from Dulles's rethinking of the church's mission, and from his manner of reproaching those who do not share his viewpoint: those who see the mission more in terms of the social than the private needs of people; those who are concerned more with non-believers than believers. A missionary living in one of the poorest regions of the Third World and a theologian living in one of the power centers of the First World are apt to develop rather different ecclesiologies, influenced profoundly by their respective vantage points. The one may be more taken up by the material needs of the poor; the other by the spiritual needs of the affluent. They should be able to learn much from each other. The first lesson might be that the church's agenda tends to be dictated by the needs of those who are served. Mutual understanding is not, in any case, promoted by attributing their differences to the sinister influences of "secularistic ideologies," or "atheistic Christianity," or "secular theologians," or "the Enlightenment." But this is what Dulles does, for example, when rebuking those who "popularized the idea that the Church had hitherto been too introverted and narcissistic." Many authentic Christians throughout the world—not just a few "progressive theologians"—believe, and with good reason, that the Catholic Church is still too introverted, and that its adaptation to non-Western cultures has not even begun, because this incarnational process is not permitted by the ethnocentric keepers of Europe's traditional religious forms and structures and conceptions.

> *In the 1930s, after some years of being distracted by the exaggerations of the "social gospel," the Protestant churches fell to a very low ebb. About that time a cry was raised, "Let the Church be the Church." As this cry was heeded, the churches began to concern themselves again with faith and worship. There was a great renewal stretching through the 1940s and 1950s.*
>
> *Since the 1960s, Catholicism has been passing through a similar crisis . . . At present . . . many are asking that the Catholic Church be the Church again.*
>
> —The Resilient Church

In virtue of the same hermeneutical principle, it would be unfair to call Dulles a legitimizer of the present socio-economic *status quo*, or a peddler of pie-in-the-sky, because of certain points emphasized in this book. The following passage, for example, might lend itself to such a pejorative interpretation, if we were to ignore what Dulles has written elsewhere, and even in the present volume, on the meaning of faith in relation to justice:

> Because we live in an imperfect world, it is inevitable that many deserving people will never receive an abundance of worldly riches . . . Many will be crushed by unfavorable circumstances, whether by natural catastrophies, innocent miscalculation, human malice, or unjust social systems . . . Christianity, however, has a message of hope even for these victims. It assures them that God, as a loving Father, opens up to all the possibility of eternal happiness. The blessings of eternal life are so great that, in comparison with them, all this earthly suffering is as nothing. (p. 22-23)

Nor do I see the validity of Dulles's objection to the idea that "the church is the church only when it exists for others." (Bonhoeffer). If Christ is the man for others, can his church exist for itself? And who are the others, anyway, if not the non-church, the outsiders, the gentiles, the unevangelized beyond the immediate environs of the church (Karl Barth)? These others are the majority of humanity, to whom the church is sent in order to become through them the universal *lumen gentium*. It may even be misleading to say that the church has a mission. It is just the other way around, really. The mission has a church. This church is a symbolical instrument for continuing the one incarnational mission of Jesus Christ to the whole of humanity

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in its historico-cultural and ethnic diversity. Am I some kind of crypto-heretic for preferring this extroverted symbol to Dulles's concept of the church's mission "to become the Church again"—a slogan he borrowed from Protestant reactions in the 1930s to the "social gospel" movement in American Protestantism? In any case it is regrettable that Dulles was unable to take account of two important works, published almost simultaneously with his own, on the purpose of the church: *The Flaming Center: A Theology of the Christian Mission*, by Carl Braaten (Fortress); and *Why the Church?*, edited by Walter Burghardt and William Thompson (Paulist Press). Roger Haight's contribution to the latter volume is especially relevant.

In spite of my various reservations, there is still much to recommend this book. Three thoughtful chapters are given to the "inner-Catholic problems" associated with ecumenism in the narrower sense of the relations between the separated denominations and traditions of Christians in Europe and North America. Here we are brought up to date on the changing concepts of interchurch membership, on the problem of eucharistic sharing, and on the new ecumenical strategies for a pluralistic age. A previous chapter on the renewal of the papacy, which is still "the gravest obstacle in the path of ecumenism" (Paul VI), reflects the hope that the papacy might eventually become an accepted sign of Christian unity, by finding new ways of exercising "single and joint ecumenical leadership," and by burdening itself less with the running of "the ecclesiastical machine."

Dulles is at his best in his lucid and sensitive treatment of the structure of doctrinal authority appropriate to a pilgrim church. Against the hierocratic and democratic theories of doctrinal authority he sets forth a pluralistic theory in which several organs of authority (scripture, tradition, the sense of the faithful, gifted individuals, appointed officials, and three forms of the ministry—doctoral, prophetic and pastoral) serve as mutual checks and balances. The only thing I find lacking here, for a church that aspires to become catholic, is some explicit recognition of the need for input from non-Western cultural zones. Such input could serve as checks against Euro-American ethnocentrism in the teachings of the church and "the approved theologians." It could also provide a balance against the weight of Western historical and cultural data which, while representing only a minor portion of the universal human experience, tend to be taken as normative, especially in Catholic moral teachings.

Although one may not agree with all of Dulles's reactions to the influence of the dominant Western culture in the life of the church today, this book is well worth reading precisely because these reactions are so sharp and provocative. One ends up wishing the author had more fully elaborated some of his critical comments: not just his thrusts against "naive progressives" and "the liberal clergy," but also his passing remarks on such topics as our "noisy, talkative, demonstrative liturgies," or our seminarians during the past decade. What does it say about the Catholic Church in America that these seminarians have been more interested in self-fulfillment and therapeutic counseling than in social activism and serious scholarship?

The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind

JULIAN JAYNES

Houghton Mifflin, $12.95

EDWARD PROFFITT

We are possibly at an end and almost certainly at a beginning: the end of all externalization of religious impulse and thus, ironically, of the Enlightenment and its progressive stages of secularization; the beginning of a new humanism, or of a new way of systematically conceiving man's history and evolution. Such, at any rate, is what Jaynes can and would make his reader feel. Having just finished *The Origin of Consciousness*, I myself feel something like Keats's Cortez staring at the Pacific, or at least like the early reviewers of Darwin or Freud. I'm not quite sure what to make of this new territory; but its expanse lies before me and I am startled by its power.

Jaynes's thesis, which is all but impossible to summarize in brief, concerns the physiology of the brain and its evolution as affected by human culture, especially as manifested by the evolution of language. There was a time, according to Jaynes—before the middle of the second millennium B.C. —when men did not possess consciousness as we know it. Directed by the right hemisphere of the brain, which we know to be nonverbal, though important to problem-solving with respect to spatial relationships, men literally heard voices, voices that directed their actions with the authority of deity. Hallucination was the mode of communication between the right and left (verbal) hemispheres, with the voices hallucinated usually being those of the recently dead. Thus the gods came into being. But as language evolved and as natural and cultural pressures changed (over-population plays a key role here for Jaynes), the metaphors of the internalized self emerged and the left hemisphere became increasingly dominant. The result was the fading away of bicameral voices and, thus, the withdrawal of the gods. We are now roughly at 800 B.C., when men learned the arts of supplication. Here is the origin of Greek and Roman polytheism as well as of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The gods withdrew to Olympus or above to the heavens, but were still remembered and still needed by men not quite capable of self-authorization. But for a long period, some men still heard their voices spasmodically (they retained bicameral powers to some extent). They were the prophets, the oracles, the sibyls. Subsequent history, however, is a history of increasing left hemispheric dominance and of solidification of the metaphors of self. In fact, the history of the last five hundred years is a history of the adjustment to the loss of seemingly exterior or bicameral authorization entirely, a loss

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speeded by the growth of science, itself a result of the evolution of consciousness.

To this thesis Jaynes brings the evidence of a polymath. A psychologist himself, he of course brings to bear the most recent work in brain physiology and schizophrenia (a contemporary example of bicamerality). But he also delves into archaeology and anthropology with convincing rigor, and discusses language and literature with the expertise of a linguist and the subtlety of a textual critic. And his knowledge of history is vast. I would urge everyone to read the book if for no other reason than that it opens out a vista of human history before, say 800 B.C., about the cutoff date, I believe, for most of us with respect to our knowledge of our species.

But it does so only for the West. One question that nags at me is, what of the East? Jaynes's account of the development of consciousness focuses almost solely on the no doubt apocryphal "cradle of civilization," with an excursion here and there into Central and South America. Are we to believe that the Chinese did not develop consciousness? That would explain their inscrutability, but not their culture. I have other reservations as well. In the third major section of the book, subtitled "Vestiges of the Bicameral Mind in the Modern World," Jaynes nowhere mentions children or contemporary psychology of (contemporary) human development. But if his thesis is right, young children should exhibit bicamerality in that Jaynes holds that consciousness is purely a learned cultural phenomenon. Then, too, Jaynes nowhere relates his theories of physiology to those of depth psychology (his grounding in behaviorism shows here), nor does he say a word about the physiology of the brain as operative at this juncture in history. How, I would like to know, does the right hemisphere *now* communicate with the left? Another question that I would like answered concerns totemism and animal worship. If the gods were originally hallucinated as human beings, how did they ever become animals—not only birds, which Jaynes does account for, but snakes and cats and cows? And what of contemporary primitives? Are they still bicameral? If not, why not?

> *. . . the attempted reformation of Judaism by Jesus can be construed as a necessarily new religion for conscious men rather than bicameral men. Behavior now must be changed from within the new consciousness rather than from Mosaic laws carving behavior from without. Sin and penance are now conscious desire and consciousness contrition, rather than in the external behaviors of the decalogue and the penances of temple sacrifice and community punishment. The divine kingdom to be regained is psychological not physical. It is metaphorical not literal. It is 'within' not* in extenso.
>
> —The Origin of Consciousness

But the matter that nags at me most involves consciousness itself. Though attempting to account for the origins of consciousness, Jaynes underplays the role of consciousness at every point. He exhibits an odd primitivism here, for though one cannot quite pin him down, one feels that he does not quite trust the intentions of the conscious mind nor the works of the ego. Was Aquinas, for example, only a hangover from an older physiological mode? Jaynes does not mention Aquinas—nor any other major theologian, for that matter, and that fact itself leaves one wondering—but he does devote a chapter to the subject of poetry in which he overlooks completely the role of consciousness in the process of creation. Failing to distinguish between the intentions of latterday poets and the possible origins of poetry, he sees poetry as a remnant of pre-conscious millennia, as a hankering after the bicameral voice of the muse only. But Jaynes hopelessly confuses poetry and meter, the language of feeling as it merges with thought and oracular messages. And if Jaynes can be so wrong about poetry as practiced in the last millennium, can we credit him on the equally serious matters of theology and its motive force?

But Jaynes is in no way a dogmatist, though he is something of a reductionist (which he himself admits). Indeed, the nondogmatic approach that he takes is one of the pleasures of the book. Another, certainly, is its style. Though scholarly, the book is lucid and lively, a joy to read in every way. It is also widely informative—what Jaynes says about the *Iliad* and the *Old Testament*, for example, sheds much light—and supremely challenging. The book will need to be addressed by theologians and ego psychologists alike, by literary critics and anthropologists, and even by behaviorists and other such mechanists. It will also need, or its thesis will, much greater refinement and a widening of its historical base if it is to be as revolutionary as Jaynes seems to mean it to be. Still, even if Jaynes proves wrong, the book is one that must be read. The thesis is worth exploring and testing, and over and above its thesis, the book gives, as I have suggested, a thrilling sense of the sweep of human history. Also, though in no way obtrusively, it makes one feel the human condition with poignancy and individual difference with new insight, and thus heightens one's human sympathies. That is a very great deal indeed.

The Sixties

Edited by
LYNDA ROSEN OBST

Random House, $19.95

KIRKPATRICK SALE

First of all I don't even know what to *do* with the damn thing. It must weigh more than five pounds, so you can't exactly cuddle it on your lap and it's a full two-handed job just to pick it up. It is a large tabloid size, about 11″ by 15″, for no particular reason, so there's not a shelf in my whole house that it will fit on and I've had to keep it down beside the bookcase jammed against the wall.

And I don't know what it's *for*

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even if I did have a place for it.

Is one supposed to read it? Almost impossible. The text is 71 separate, usually two-page, pieces by a bunch of famous and not-so-famous and famous-for-the-wrong-reason people out of the 1960s and '70s, commenting on a single event they are supposed to have a cosmic perception of. Abbie Hoffman on Berkeley in 1960, Stan Lee on Spiderman, Richard Speck's defense lawyer on his client's innocence, Stewart Brand on something about the whole earth, Viva on Max's, Wavy Gravy on Woodstock, things like that. Nothing that you'd particularly want to read about, probably, at least not from these people, *at least* not in the kitchy-cutesy fashion the editor has apparently encouraged.

Or are you only supposed to look at the pictures? There are photographs on almost every single one of its 316 pages: some small snapshotty things, some full-page jobs, some double-page spreads, and a few of them elaborate three-page pullouts. (These last are the most mysterious: one, for example, of the hosing of blacks in Birmingham, is an unfocused blur, and the third page, once you pull it out, turns out to be a totally abstract and unreadable swirl of black and white.) Some of the pictures are nice enough, but you've probably seen them before, and very few are of the kind that you'd want to keep going back to, it seems to me. Most are so dreary and ordinary—a not-handsome bikini bather to illustrate Tom Wolfe's surfers, Kennedy shaking hands in Ireland (?!) to illustrate his assassination, a close-up of Dylan that makes him look like your nephew Elmer in a snit—that you wonder why space was given to them.

Or are you supposed to keep it around as some kind of reference book for the period that our media have packaged for us as "the Sixties"? (And in so doing distorting the whole thing out of historical reality and substituting only symbolism, which this sort of book only helps to foster.) Well, for twenty bucks it makes a kind of expensive reference tool, but the real trouble is that there's no one here you can really imagine ever wanting to *refer* to.

For example, the very last person —the absolute bottom-of-the-last-list person—that I would pick to tell me about Columbia 1968 would be a wise-ass lightweight like James Simon Kunen, who, you may remember, wrote *The Strawberry Statement*, a mindless apolitical mish-mash and perhaps the single most pointless book to have come out of that college generation—especially since there are at least six other people who have done books on that particular demonstration who could have offered a serious commentary. And would you believe that *John Dean* is the one they picked to write on the Washington anti-war demonstrations in 1969?—even though he's so atrocious that he even tries to paint a sympathetic picture of Richard ("Put 'em in concentration camps") Kleindienst? Or

The Reincarnation question

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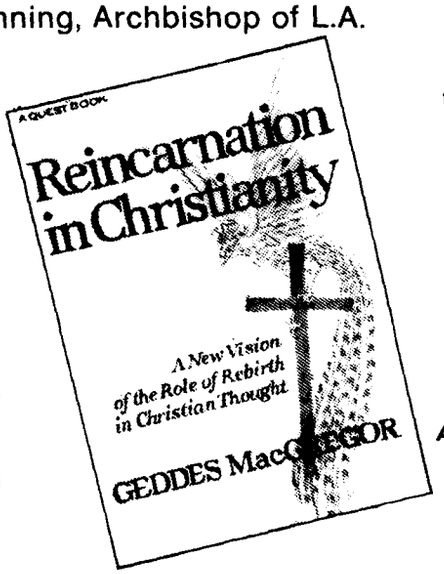

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Julie Nixon Eisenhower on being a college student in 1968? Or Benjamin Bradlee, for God sakes, on the Kennedy assassination, who manages to make it a big maudlin affair from which every drop of political significance—even political speculation—is drained.

This is, as you may have gathered by now, a really hopeless book, the kind that might give the concept of "nonbook" a bad name. It seems to have been the idea of Lynda Rosen Obst, who has no apparent qualifications for the job other than she was, it says here, "editorial consultant on the national stage production, *Beatlemania*"—which gives you some idea of the sophistication of the project—and is married to David Obst, a clever young man who publishes books through Random House, which published this one.

I suppose I am expected with this kind of book to rush out and buy a cocktail table to slip under it so that at least I'll have a place to put it. What with its heft and size, however, I think I'll use it to prop up that wobbly shelf in the back of the garage.

G. K. Chesterton: Radical Populist

MARGARET CANOVAN

Harcourt, Brace, $10.95

JEFFREY MEYERS

The purpose of this book is to examine the thought and writings of G. K. Chesterton (1873-1936), who was once a significant and popular writer. But his ideas, as Dr. Canovan is forced to concede, are simplistic and incoherent, vitiated by silliness and prejudice, and conveyed through tedious paradox (Dickens "did not always manage to make his characters men, but he always managed, at the least, to make them gods") and resounding banalities ("There are only three things in the world that women do not understand; and they are Liberty, Equality and Fraternity"). Many of the issues he wrote about—Distributism and Temperance—are now dead. His ideas were unrealistic and ineffective in his own time, and the author does not succeed in making them interesting and significant today.

Chesterton's idiosyncratic populism was based on a faith in ordinary people (he felt the divine origin of man was the basis for democracy) and a commitment to the impractical social ideal of a self-governing peasant nation which would recreate his vision (inherited from William Morris) of the Merrie England that had been destroyed by Protestant capitalism. But, as Dr. Canovan points out, his writings have all the vices of populism: the appeal to emotion, disillusionment with parliamentary government, ignorance of the complexities of politics, tendency to support a popular dictator, attraction to conspiracy theories and anti-Semitism. Chesterton did, in fact, sympathize with Fascism and defend Mussolini in *The Resurrection of Rome*, published the year after the Roman Catholic Church compromised with the Fascist regime and signed the Concordat of 1929. And his fiction is "full of cheap jokes about pawnbrokers' noses and sinister figures of Jewish plutocrats."

This short but repetitive book tends to treat Chesterton in a rather sketchy and superficial way. One would like to know much more about the theological influences on his religious thought which led to his conversion to Catholicism in 1922—long after he had formulated his basic ideas—and about his books on St. Thomas and St. Francis. There could have been a fuller discussion of his personal and ideological relations with Shaw and Wells and with Belloc, who, like Chesterton, wrongly believed that progressive social legislation would lead to the oppressive authority of the "servile state." It would have been profitable to explore the significant influence of *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908) on *1984* on "The Road to Wigan Pier Diary," though Orwell, criticized the naively idealistic Chesterton for wanting "to see a free peasant or other small-owner living in his privately owned and probably insanitary cottage; not a wage-slave living in an excellently appointed Corporation flat and tied down by restrictions as to sanitation." And the analysis of Chesterton's ideas would have been considerably more effective in the context of his life and contemporary thought, for Dr. Canovan never explains his personal relationship with common men nor identifies the "intellectual elite" who inspired and opposed his energetic dogmatism.

In the brief conclusion of the book Dr. Canovan traces modern manifestations of populist thought—disillusionment with industrial progress, fear of government power, concern for environmental conservation, distrust of technocratic experts, return to agrarian communes and sympathy for Third World peasants. But she does not make any direct connection between these signs of contemporary unrest and Chesterton's radical yet reactionary beliefs. Despite the advocacy of Chesterton's thought, I believe he will be remembered not for his social and political ideas, but for his vitality, exuberance, generosity and good nature; for his critical studies of Chaucer, Blake, Cobbett, Dickens, Browning and Stevenson; and for his Father Brown detective stories.

Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision

ROBERT SCHOLES and
ERIC S. RABKIN

Oxford Univ. Press, $2.95

The Arts & Beyond: Visions of Man's Aesthetic Future

Edited by
THOMAS F. MONTELEONE

Doubleday, $7.95

RICHARD KUCZKOWSKI

Scholes and Rabkin take this stuff very seriously indeed. After surveying the history of science fiction and briefly explaining scientific and pseudo-scientific concepts that frequently turn up in SF, they analyze ten novels they consider representative of the range of

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the genre. All are "works of practical and speculative philosophy" for "science fiction has used its special vision and its unique knowledge to trace the history of human power over nature and to ask how that power ought to function. . . . For a century and a half, science fiction has been making a serious and dedicated effort to create a modern conscience for the human race."

Can a genre be said to have consciousness and intention? Is the clear echo of Stephen Daedalus meant to suggest that Wells, Asimov, LeGuin, *et al.* are in the same league as Joyce, Faulkner, Conrad, Hardy, *et al.* as forgers of the modern conscience? Is this criticism or academic overcompensation? Let us hear more from Scholes and Rabkin.

SF is based on a "radical dislocation from present reality," and "concerns itself powerfully and continually with the examination of symbols central to our vision of ourselves"; "both science and science fiction make a conscious effort to recognize their beliefs and examine their validity. In this way both arrive at new, and potentially more useful, fictions." Yet SF also "has often implied that 'there are some things man was not meant to know.' " Indeed, SF "actually only uses science—accurately or not—in order to achieve its primary aim of exploring the life and mind of man," and "trying to allay" fears of the vast, inhospitable universe which science has revealed. SF can use the discoveries of science "to motivate inquiry into age-old human problems" (such as divided loyalties in Simak's *Way Station* and "the conflict in man's nature between pre-determination and free will"); it "not only uses reincarnation to explore problems of human godliness, but to reintroduce the problem of pride which led to the Fall originally."

SF, in other words, seems split between radical exploration—testing beliefs, creating myths, pushing metaphors to their limits and beyond—and conservative or nostalgic consolation—transposing familiar ideologies into technological fancy dress, extremes of space and time, etc.: the art of making traditional notions of human nature or society and value conflicts seem natural and universal.

But do the writers of normal science fiction in fact pursue these sober, earnest ethical ventures of exploration and consolation?

The twelve stories in *The Arts and Beyond* manipulate conceptions of art and the artist which, extracted and strung together, compose a solemn credo: Art is the record of the artist's feelings. Great art derives from the artist's great personal suffering, vital isolation from society, technical skill, and need to create—an irrational, even desperate instinct. The artist must directly manipulate his materials and thus charge them with emotion to create unique but essentially representational objects or performances. The past is the repository of masterpieces; in the present or future technique is degenerate and content is debased.

Some of the stories seem to argue that departure from these rather reactionary tenets is dystopic, dangerous. In Charles L. Grant's "Eldorado," a city designed to be "the world's cultural womb" and to disprove the myth that for artists "starvation equals brilliance" coddles, cuddles, and caresses them into sterility. In George Effinger's "The Ghost Writer," an advanced society idolizes "writers" who, like mediums, achieve contact with dead masters and publicly recite incomprehensible but moving bits of their works. The greatest "writer" is in touch with Shakespeare; the artistically barren society tolerates no original creation. Arthur C. Clarke (tongue somewhat in cheek) tells an amusing tale of a physiologist whose "purely cerebral" interest in music leads him to determine scientifically the principles by which tunes from great works or commercials embed themselves in consciousness. By means of a synthesizing machine named Ludwig, he then attempts to construct the "Ultimate Melody" which composers throughout history have been trying to create. But emotionless intelligence aided by sophisticated technology can only produce disaster, not art.

Technology itself, however, need not be the root of unhappy endings or dystopias; indeed, it can enhance the scope of art and the complexity of the finished work. Cheap synthetic materials and computer-directed processes do eliminate the sculptor's skilled handiwork on recalcitrant stone or metal in Kornbluth's "With These Hands." But in William Rotsler's "Patron of the Arts," sophisticated holography enables the artist to create elaborate 3-D sculptures that rival—even perfect—life. And in Grant Carrington's "Stella Blue," a virtuoso can play a guitar/computer hybrid even better with an artificial limb than with his real hand. (Note, however, that a tragic love affair and contact with the music of the past vitalized his technically good but "cold, emotionless, unfeeling" playing.)

Only a few stories stretch beyond hoary conceptions of art to deal with material that even approaches the revolutionary quality of much current artistic theory and practice. Ronald Cain's "Telepathos" concerns a new art form in which the artist painstakingly analyzes a complex emotion, then directly but telepathically imprints its pure form upon a sphere of sensitive material which imparts it to the "spectator." (How odd to call these black spheres of impersonal emotions "palparia"; surely they are T.S. Eliot's objective correlatives!) J.J. Russ's "The Masterpiece" focuses on an excellent copyist and imitator of "old masters" (such as Warhol) who produces a series of brilliant original works during schizophrenic seizures. His masterpiece blends creation, destruction, and revenge into a new standard for art—a new old master to be copied. Harlan Ellison's "Shoppe Keeper," perhaps the best story in the collection, takes the form of virtuoso variations on themes of Michael Moorcock and Twilight Zone-y SF. A deft mixture of fantasy and *frisson*, it tells of a man whose art consists in rearranging the universe through complicated energy exchanges between the end of time and the past. But the impulses of his artistic nature jeopardize the survival of his sister,

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himself, and the world at the end of time.

No consolation in *The Arts and Beyond* (despairing suicides or deaths are fairly common); and no profound investigation of the nature or ethics or art—just workmanlike, imaginative stories that exploit essentially nineteenth-century conventions of form and content for fun. Yet Scholes and Rabkin would make exploratory, moral, and consciously literary SF the paradigm for the whole genre; their ten "representative" novels (including *Frankenstein, The Time Machine, We, Childhood's End, A Canticle for Liebowitz,* and *The Left Hand of Darkness*) as well as most of the works they comment on contain rather higher levels of these qualities than is usual in normal SF. Further, Scholes and Rabkin feel that it is the destiny of SF to transform the shape of "serious" literature, then to disappear. (They make much of the fact that "serious" writers like Pynchon, Vonnegut, Burroughs, Barth, Burgess, Golding, and Coover have produced works that are similar to those of serious or literary SF writers.)

But this consistent effort to displace the center of interest in SF from entertainment to high seriousness amounts to destroying the genre in order to save it for academia. For play amidst and with the conventional probabilities of commercialized pop mythology—even the evasions of lightweight escapist forms like "space operas"—can be as illuminating of our hopes and fears as conscious exploration of more respectable literary and moral values. And perhaps the mission of popular literature is simply to counteract the inroads of seriousness. But it takes the raffish genius of a Leslie Fiedler, discovering archetypes as he slogs merrily but observantly through the trash, to realize that.

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Haitian Water Project

With 300 to 400 patients a day coming to their clinics, Oblate medical Sisters trace much of the chronic fever and disease to badly polluted local drinking water. This year their mission has plans for pure water supplies for 10 more villages. Substantial funds are needed for cement for the reservoirs, pumps pipes, faucets, etc. in this impoverished land. Donations for this vital Haitian project should be sent to: OBLATE FOREIGN MISSIONS, BOX 1402, LOWELL, MASS. 01853.

IN BRIEF

THE CHRISTIAN-MARXIST DIALOGUE, *by Peter Hebblethwaite, Paulist Press,* $3.95.

If anyone wants a careful, sympathetic presentation of the history of dialogue between Christians and Marxists, then this is the book to get. If a book is also sought which will enthusiastically promote the Christian-Marxist dialogue in an uncritical fashion, then this is definitely not the one to get.

In the '60s Christian and Marxist thinkers in Europe began to reach out to each other. Several conferences were held; progress toward real dialogue was being made. But then authoritarianism reasserted itself on the Marxist side. Those who engaged in dialogue fell from favor or were even expelled from the party: Schaff and Kolakowski from Poland, the Dubcek group in Czechoslovakia, the Praxis group in Yugoslavia, Garaudy in France.

In Latin America the dialogue has really meant joint action by Christians and Marxists, or rather, according to Hebblethwaite, an insufficiently critical acceptance of Marxism by the Liberation theologians. They attempt, for example, to distinguish between Marxist philosophy (which is bad) and Marxist analysis of society (which is good). But "the onus of proof lies upon the Christian Marxists. They have to show, and not merely to assert, that the 'philosophy' is *in practice* separable from the analysis of society, and that Communism is *in practice* separable from totalitarianism. So far these tasks have not been accomplished." (p. 108)

But what of the "Eurocommunist" protestations of the French and Italian Communist parties; they claim they would stand for democracy and pluralism if they came to power? Hebblethwaite asks, why did the French party vote *unanimously* one year to retain the slogan "the dictatorship of the proletariat," and then vote *unanimously* the next to eliminate it? Until democracy and pluralism exist *within* the Communist parties, he feels, they cannot exist between them and other political parties either.

The book is well researched, well thought out, and well written. It would be well to read it.

LEONARD SWIDLER

CONTEMPORARY TRANSFORMATIONS OF RELIGION, *by Bryan Wilson, Oxford University Press, $6.50.*

One of the most disturbing and, in the long run, ominous aspects of what now passes in some quarters for a "religious revival" is the idea that phenomena—like transcendental meditation, parapsychology, and a fascination with Eastern cults—which, in the strict sense, have little or nothing to do with real religion—the relationship between God and man—offer a valid response to the secularization of our age.

In *Contemporary Transformations of Religion*, the three Riddell Memorial Lectures delivered at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Oxford sociologist Bryan Wilson delivers a scholarly and occasionally witty uppercut to the notion that the Rolling Stones, because of the enthusiasm they engender, are the modern day equivalent of nineteenth century evangelists Moody and Sankey, or that the attempts of some contemporary clergy to compete with the media on their own terms for men's leisure time attention is a sign of religious vitality.

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Subjective feeling reinforced by group-engendered emotions, Wilson argues, is a quick, cheap substitute for the steady growth in grace gained only by a lifelong cultivation of the understanding. The new cults, he concludes, far from representing a religious revival, confirm the process of secularization, and demonstrate how inconsequential religion has become for modern society, for "they add nothing to any prospective reintegration of society, and contribute nothing toward the culture by which society might live." He has given us a powerful conservative tract in the best sense of that word and a sensible intellectual antidote to the irrationality that inevitably weakens the heart of the Western religious tradition.

RAYMOND A. SCHROTH

CORRESPONDENCE

(*Conitnued from page 163*)

The Education of a Prejudiced Man was very kind, but I should clarify one or two possible misunderstandings to which I myself may have contributed. I found no bigotry at the College of New Rochelle during my tenure there (1936-43). Toward the end of my stay certain anxieties developed concerning my lack of enthusiasm for what went by the name of Scholastic Philosophy, and good-natured Mother Aquinas, the Dean, did gently warn me that my eclectic bent was attracting notice. The Ursuline Community had given the young lay faculty of those days remarkable freedom to teach, but toward the end of my tenure a certain tightening in the direction of orthodoxy set in. This was due, I think, not so much to the New Rochelle Ursulines themselves as to the backwash of a visitation from France by an ultra-conservative Mother General. One result was Mother Aquinas's mimeo to the faculty about visiting Chapel that I was uncharitable enough to reproduce in my book. But bigotry, no. I had seven happy years at New Rochelle.

A less important point concerns what the indulgent Dr. Shea refers to as my "name-dropping," particularly in the case of my brief encounter with George Gershwin when I was playing piano in a Boston restaurant during my graduate school days. Though Gershwin said little to me after I played through his songs, that meeting was to me as momentous as a brusque nod from H. L. Mencken would have been to young James T. Farrell. So it seemed more nearly worth a page than the one Dean Shea regrets I didn't write—about whether I had ever felt "the faintest stirrings of desire" as I sat near "all those lovely coeds" (the words are Dr. Shea's) over the years. There is no name in my book that does not stand for a line etched deeply in my memory. "It is not ours to obliterate these traces," says Mauriac, "The contacts of life are ineffaceable, and no destiny has ever crossed our own and left no mark."

JOSEPH GERARD BRENNAN

Abigail McCarthy (con't)

lems of the poor and an awareness of the need for world peace. Without an understanding of the Constitution and the political process, however, those nice attitudes will produce no changes in society.

As a result of the Center's announcements about the political ignorance of the young, The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a grant of $100,000 to concerned organizations to hold a series of regional conferences to promote citizen participation in the political process. Promote how? one may well ask. The Committee for the Study of the American Electorate has been telling us for some time that the decline in participation in the political process as evidenced by voting patterns has been the trend of at least two decades. Marie D. Eldridge, administrator of the study cited above and of the health, education and welfare center which made it public, is quite right to say "Political knowledge and attitudes are not acquired solely through the academic process. The media, the community and the family can certainly be credited with substantial influence."

Maurice Rosenblatt, director of the Committee for the Study of the Electorate, is probably also right when he says, "In a period in which we made it vastly easier for people to vote, the impulse . . [to do so] is increasingly lacking. More and more people have come to question whether there is any relationship between the ballot they cast and the quality of their lives."

Still one must start somewhere. The value placed on knowledge says something about the values undergirding that knowledge. I vote for putting a primary importance on the basic facts of the political process. Let us reestablish the necessary links between the how and the who and the changes which should come from improved attitudes. Back, if necessary to the repetitive drill, the sealed envelope—the State Boards—or to equally powerful symbols of the importance of the machinery of democracy of the best of the dwindling number of democracies in our world.

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